S N 489 496 648 668 175 [491]

Only since 1930 have some automobile highways been built, and the Communist regime, in cooperation with Soviet Russia, are building the first Inner Asiatic railway, linking Alma-Ata with Lan-chou. This railway will, without doubt, speed up the Sinification of the frontier areas, and above all add industrialization to agriculture and pastoral nomadism.

S N 631 563 657 175

As far as Chinhai was concerned, the Western Mongols (the Oirats) were also locally ruled by dzasaks, the leaders of banners. Unlike the banners of Inner and Outer Mongolia and Sinkiang, however, they did not combine banners to form leagues or to elect one of their tribal leaders as the captain-general of the league. The Chinese governor- with his seat in Sining - functioned as captain-general. In regard to the nomadic Tibetans, the Chinese government appointed chieftains as dzasak-lamas and gave them the rights and the privileges which this office involves. The sedentary Tibetans were ruled by t'u-ssus, also appointees of the Peking government. By and large, this governmental pattern existed until the Communists came into power.

S N 563 659 175

The form of governing non-Chinese peoples changed in the course of time in various ways, but one thing never changed: the aim of the Peking government to rule, to suppress, to exploit, and to sinify them.

S 631 635 175

Unlike the eighteen provinces in China proper, the province of Sinkiang (after 1884) and the Eastern Three Provinces, (after 1907) the areas comprising Mongolia, Tibet, and Chinese Turkestan, although occupying more space than China proper, were administrated by a quite different type of governmental system.

S 631 659 175 647

Political subdivisions of the Chinese Empire such as Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan and Tibet were usually referred to as dependencies. This is however an inaccurate translation of the Chinese term "fan," which really means "the barbarian west." Since the cultural, ethnic and historical background in these areas was very different from the rest of the Empire, these regions required, and in practice had, a very particular type of governmental control. All these frontier territories were administered by the "Department of Dependencies" in Peking. This department was subdivided into the following bureaus:

a. Inner Mongolian bureau, that administered frontier boundaries, titles of nobility, appointment of officials, military affairs, league conferences, and finally organization of banner units of Inner Mongolia.

b. "Reception bureau" for Inner Mongolia nobility, that was responsible for the payments and allowances to the Inner Mongolian aristocracy.

c. Eastern Turkestan bureau, that was in charge of Moslem affairs in Eastern Turkestan.

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Sinkiang AI1

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648 support from its new military allies, the Chinese National Govern-
ment searched for new links with the outside world. In February 1942
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*175 on his visit to India, Chian Kai-shek explored the possibility of the
*648 supply route via Tibet through Chinghai Province. While this long
• 491 and arduous route never became of major importance, it served as
S a communication link over which large commercial caravans
175 passed for many years, even after the war. This development
648 brought new importance to Chinghai Province where the Moslem
general, Ma Pu-ch'ing, was appointed Pacification Comissioner
by the National Government. This appointment was of still greater
importance for the Sinkiang Government. As a Moslem, Ma Pu-
ch'ing could become a potential rival of Governor Sheng Shih-ts'ai
in extending his influence over the Moslem Turks of Sinkiang Pro-
vince, as Ma Chung-ying had done before him. More important
still was his control over the strategically located province of
Chinghai. From Chinghai was to open a route to the Tarim Basin
and to the southern part of Sinkiang. Since this route passed to the
south of the Nanshan Range, it was better protected from any
Soviet threat from Outer Mongolia than was the caravan route of
the Kansu corridor. This corridor to Sinkiang had been controlled
by the Russian tank force at Qomul while the new route, if developed,
would give the National Government a passage to Sinkiang not so
easily threatened from Soviet-controlled territory. In fact, the
build-up of Chinghai as a strategic center was the logical Chinese
Nationalist answer to the Russian domination of Outer Mongolia.
Sinkiang, formerly a center of the Chinese Inner-Asian position, had
now become a contested frontier area which could be held only if a
relatively safe and practicable connection could be opened up.
From this time on, the Chinese position at Sining and the Kokonor
and in the Tsaidam area became of key strategic importance.

S While the Chinese National Government was beginning to re-
175 establish its position in central Asia, it negotiated with Sheng Shih-
648 ts'ai. Chiang Kai-shek himself came to Lanchow in Kansu and the
chief of the northwest headquarters at Sian, General Chu Shao-liang,
flew twice to Urumchi for negotiations with Governor Sheng. The
second time he was accompanied by Madame Chiang Kai-shek and
Wu Chunghsin, who was in 1944 to become successor to Governor
Sheng. At this time, Wu Tse-hsiang (Chaucer H. Wu) became
Governor Sheng's Commissioner for Foreign Affairs. In the fall of
1943, Governor Sheng himself flew to Chungking to confer with
Chiang Kai-shek, As a result of these talks, the National Government
began to subsidize the Sinkiang administration. Several thousand
S Chinese refugees were moved into Sinkiang between 1942 and 1943,
[167] and at the beginning of 1943 Nationalist troops were also sent in.

This Nationalist advance was paralleled by the withdrawal of
the Soviet troops which began in spring of 1942 and was almost

*668 *175 316 5. The excavation of a new coal shaft near Sian started on August 24, 1955, and is expected to be completed in 1958. It will become part of the Tungchwan coal mines.

*668 *175 315 2. Kansu.

The most important industrial project in Kansu is perhaps the Yümen Oil Field. Since the Communists took over, extensive reconstruction work has been carried out in this major oil center of China with the help of experts from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and East Germany. The Communists boasted that production has increased many fold. If [433] the index of production in 1950 was 100, that in 1951 was 140, and 1954 was 430. In 1955, they planned to produce thirty percent more crude oil than in 1954, and capital investment allocated for the sinking of new wells was twenty-five percent more than in 1954. Latest record of drilling is 234.3 meters in one day, and products include petroleum, kerosene, lubricating oil, diesel oils, tar and paraffin wax. The total output has never been revealed, but it is known that more than five thousand workers are employed.

*668 *175 The Communists have also paid attention to the development of industrial production in Kansu in general. In 1955, twenty-one state-owned or semi-state-owned factories and mines were built or renovated, and all of them are in operation. The [379] more important ones are as follows: (1) a power plant in Lanchou, [258] which increased the supply of electric power by fifty percent; [316] (2) six oil-extracting plants in Kuting and Wuwei, which, when fully completed, will increase the production of vegetable oil in Kansu nearly two hundred percent; and (3) five small coal mines, which increased the coal production by 88.2 percent over 1954.

It was reported on April 4, 1953, that one of the country's [316] largest copper deposits was found in Kansu, the Pai-yin-ch'ang copper mine, which they planned to develop under the first Five Year Plan as one of the major industrial projects in that [382] area. There is also a report that a refinery has been built in Lanchou. But details on these developments are lacking.

*668 *175 315 316 There are comparatively few industrial activities in Chinghai. However, with the development of the Chinghai-Tibet highway, the Communists are hopeful that rich oil and coal deposits may be found in the Tsaidam Basin. Tsaidam is one of the country's major areas scheduled for oil-prospecting in 1955, and drilling has already been started there. Besides, [491] mining of anthracite coal has begun in an undisclosed location in Chinghai, which was discovered by the builders of the Chinghai-Tibet highway in August 1953. Truck loads of the coal are now going regularly to Lhasa and other points along the new highway.

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TRADE

I. The Pre-Communist Period

Trade in the Northwest before the Communist conquest may be discussed by provinces.

A. Shensi

438 • 491 Trade between Shensi and the rest of the country was carried out mainly through the historical Great Northwest Highway, which links this province with Hankow and Tientsin on the one hand, and Kansu and Sinkiang on the other. Since 1937, the National government has undertaken to extend the Lunghai Railway to the Northwest, and before the Communists took over it had reached T'ien-shui, Kansu. In addition, the northern part of this province was closely connected with Shansi through three regional highways, and the southern part was linked with Hankow through the Han River, and with Szechwan through the Szechwan-Shensi bridle pass.

[496] [487]

366 635 The commercial centers of this province are as follows: (1) Sian, the provincial capital, which not only commands the trade of the whole province, but also carries considerable transit trade; (2) T'ung-kuan, which is a transportation center between the three provinces of Shensi, Shansi and Honan; (3) An-k'ang, also known as Hsin-an, a commercial center of the Han River drainage area; (4) San-yuan, the commercial center of the so-called North Shensi Plain; and (5) Han-chung, also known as Nan-cheng, a trade center between Shensi and Szechwan.

439 435 *175 According to statistics of 1934, a normal year in pre-war times, the total value of imports and exports of this province, including foreign trade, amounted to 57,168,455 yüan, most of which were carried out through Tientsin and Hankow. The details are shown in the following table:

Table I: The Exports and Imports of Shensi, 1934

Description	Value (yüan)	
A. Exports:		19,087,221
raw cotton	16,250,000	
hemp	200,000	
raw silk	300,000	
wool	160,000	
fur and hide	757,221	
tung oil	900,000	
raw paints and paint oil	250,000	
fungs-in-trees	270,000	

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B. Imports		38,081,234
textiles	22,209,861	
sundries	6,968,868	
medical herbs and drugs	2,232,542	
apparels	1,704,563	
machinery and iron goods	1,295,837	
chinaware	1,087,299	
edibles	781,044	
kerosene and oil	701,134	
cosmetics	572,751	
paper	527,235	
vehicles and transportation equipment	76,235	
Grand Total		57,168,455

Source: Shina Shōbetsū Zenshi, 1943 ed., Vol. 6, pp. 805-15.

B. Kansu

Aside from the historical Great Northwest Highway, trade between Kansu and the rest of the country was carried out through the following routes: (1) the Yellow River, including its tributary, the Huang River or Hsi-ning-Ho, which is navigable between Hsi-ning and Pao-t'ou, the latter being the terminal of the Peking-Pao-t'ou Railway; (2) the caravan route between Hsi-ning and Ninghsia via Lanchou; and (3) the highway between Kansu and Szechwan.

The commercial cities of this province are as follows: (1) Lanchou (also known as Kao-lan), the provincial capital of Kansu and the commercial center of not only Kansu, but also Chinghai and Ninghsia; (2) Ping-liang, the commercial center of east Kansu; (3) T'ien-shui, the commercial center of south Kansu; (4) Lin-hsia, the commercial center of the area to the west of the T'ao River; and (5) Chang-yeh, the commercial center of the Ho-hsi Corridor.

According to 1933 statistics, the total value of imports and exports of Kansu amounted to 7,933,554 yüan, about one eighth of that of Shensi. The details are shown on the following table:

Table II: The Exports and Imports of Kansu, 1933

Description	Value (yüan)	
A. Exports:		1,536,832
fur and hide	714,105	
medical herbs	605,319	
tobacco	217,408	

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439 The trade between Sinkiang and Afghanistan of the same year
435 amounted to 1,378,040 gold rupees. The details are as follows:
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Table IX: The Trade Between Sinkiang and Afghanistan, 1927

Description	Value (rupee)	
A. Imports:		830,500
opium	675,000	
horses	10,000	
furs and hides	52,350	
Russian metal goods	8,550	
almonds	3,600	
B. Exports:		547,540
cotton cloth	176,500	
cankas	94,500	
woolen carpet	80,000	
horses	57,000	
chinaware	21,200	
felt carpet	16,800	
donkeys and mules	13,000	
Khoten silk	12,500	
Grand Total		1,378,040

Source: Chung-kuo ching-chi nien-chien, 1935 ed., Vol. 3, p. T.95.

N
*668 II. The Communist Period
43 Trade in the Northwest under the Communist regime may be described in two parts: (1) changes in volume and kind, and (2) government control.

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[198] A. Changes in Volume and Kind

As far as the physical characteristics are concerned, trade in the Northwest under the Communist regime seems to have remained more or less the same as it was before, because economic reconstruction in this region is still in its initial stage.

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*668 The following changes, however, may deserve special attention:
496 First, the Communists have taken great pains to improve trans-
• 491 portation in the Northwest. The most ambitious project, of
198 course, is the Lanchou-Alma Ata Railway, which they plan to complete by 1957. Other improvements include: (1) the Lanchou—Pao-t'ou Railway, which is still under construction: (2) the Hsi-ning-Lhasa Highway, which was opened to traffic on November 16, 1954: and (3) the Tunhuang-Chinghai Highway, which

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*668 links Kansu and west Chinghai, and was opened to traffic in De-
491 cember 1954. Besides, it is also reported that the original Lan-
198 chou-Chengtu and Lanchou-Urumchi highways have been improved upon, and the Outer Mongolia Great Grass Route between

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Sinkiang and Outer Mongolia have been re-opened for traffic. (See section Communications.) With these improvements in transportation, it is only logical to assume that trade in the Northwest must also have increased in volume.

Another important change is the increase of production of the Yümen Oil Field and the establishment of four new textile factories in Shensi (for details see section Industry). Although there is no information on the distribution of these products, it is reasonable to assume that most of them are intended for the consumption in the Northwest. If this is the case, the import of textiles and kerosene, which were two of the most important items of the imports of this region, must have been reduced.

Still another important change is the enlargement of cotton plantations in Sinkiang. It is reported that the China Cotton, Yarn and Cloth Company in Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region plans to send five thousand tons of cotton to other parts of the country in addition to ensuring an adequate supply for local consumption. On November 3, 1955, the first cargo of cotton of Sinkiang was dispatched to Shensi for its textile industry.

B. Government Control

The Communist control of trade in the Northwest is more or less the same as that in other parts of the country. The main instrument of control is the state trading companies, which are in charge of wholesale trade and, together with the various cooperatives and mobile trading units, purchase of native products from this region. According to Communist reports, the six basic commodities in Sian, i.e., food, cotton cloth, edible oil, coal, tea and salt, have been fully monopolized by the state trading companies since June 29, 1955; and all private wholesale establishments dealing with those goods have been liquidated. More than one hundred members of the "capitalist side" were sent to reform camps, and the store assistants were either employed by the state trading companies or sent back to their native places to seek other employment. In the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, the number of branches of state trading companies exceeded five hundred in 1954, about eight times as many as in 1950. They provide the people there with general merchandise, cotton cloth, oil and fats, petroleum, pharmaceuticals and stationary.

Aside from supplying goods on the wholesale level, the state trading companies have also undertaken to buy goods from this region. Among the goods bought in 1950 are: (1) wool, 23,000 catties, (2) hides, 800,000 pieces, (3) intestines, 1,270,000 pieces, (4) bristles, 280,000 catties, (5) tung oil, 4,500,000 catties, (6) medical herbs, 4,000,000 catties, (7) cotton, 800,000 piculs and (8) grain, 130,000,000 catties (cf. The Native Products of the Northwest, preface, Sian, 1951).

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*175 487 648 It was the Mongol Empire under Chingis Khan (1162-1227) which extended her power from the Yellow River through the Northern Road across Asia into Poland and Hungary to the Danube. Marco Polo went to China from Italy in 1275 by way of the Southern Road. Through the centuries, however, the life of the trade routes was subject to frequent fluctuations. There have been interruptions to commerce during the periods of warfare when the Huns came south of the mountains, and the roads were overrun. But as soon as hostilities ceased, the merchants would resume their accustomed task of rebuilding their caravans and carrying loads of goods eastward and westward.

*175 487 [491] [498] These trade routes remained significant through the years until modern transportation was introduced to China. Later on, motor highways were built, based on the old trade routes in this area. The Lanchow-Urumchi-Alam Ata Railway is presently being constructed along the old Northern Road. Even so, caravans still travel throughout the northwest.

II. Communications Development before and under the Nationalist Government

A. Railways

*175 496 In the vast area of Northwest China, there was only one railway line which was an extension of the Lunghai Railway running to Shensi province. This railway is an east-west trunk line, starting from a seaport in Kiangsu, running through Honan and Shensi, and now into Kansu. Construction was started on different sections as early as 1903, but owing to civil strife only the 810 kilometer section from Taipu Harbor near Haichou in Kiangsu in the east, westward to Ling-pao in Honan, was completed prior to 1930. Construction on the section from Ling-pao to Tung-kuan, a distance of about seventy kilometers, was initiated in 1930 and completed in August, 1932. It was extended another 130 kilometers to Sian in December, 1934. Service was inaugurated before 1937 on the last section in Shensi from Sian to Paoki, a distance of 170 kilometers.

[504] Because of obstructions in Taipu Harbor, a new port at Lien-yün was built in 1935 to serve this railroad. In the same year, a thirty-seven kilometer extension to join the new port with the trunk line at Hsin-pu was completed.

During the war, railway construction in the Northwest was emphasized. To solve the serious shortage of coal on the Lunghai Railway, a branch line of about 138 kilometers was created in December, 1940, from Hsien-yang northward through San-yüan and Yao-hsien to Tung-ch'uan in Tung-kuan county. Despite the extreme shortage of rail-building materials and manpower, work on the extension of the Paoki-T'ien-shui section began in 1939 and

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*175 it was opened for traffic in the autumn of 1945. This 165 kilometer railway ran from Paoki following a stretch of the Wei River to T'ien-shui in Kansu. This Paoki-Tien-shui area was regarded as a place of great strategic importance during the war.

Excluding the Hsien-yang-Tung-ch'uan branch of 138 kilometers, total mileage of the Lunghai Railway, before 1949, was about 1,380 kilometers of which the section from Tung-kuan to T'ien-shui running in the Northwest Region was roughly 600 kilometers in length.

B. Highways

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491 Highway construction in Northwest China had been well-developed up to the war. The main lines may be listed as follows:

	kms.
1. Highways in Shensi:	
Sian-Chang-wu section (of Sian-Lanchow Highway)	210
Sian-Tungkuan	145
Sian-Paoki-Ning-chiang section (of Szechwan-Shensi Highway)	500
Sian-Mei-hsien	145
Wei-nan-Ta-li-Han-cheng	180
2. Highways in Kansu:	
Lanchou-Ping-liang-Chang-wu section (of Sian-Lanchou Highway)	550
Lanchou-Yumen-Hsin-hsin-chia section (of Kansu-Sinkiang Highway)	1,400
Lanchou-Hsiang-tang section (of Kansu-Chinghai Highway)	120
Lanchou-Min-hsien section	350
Hua-chia-ling-T'ien-shui	210
Ping-liang-Kuyüan-Tung-hsin (in Ninghsia)	220
3. Highways in Ninghsia (now part of Kansu):	
Ninghsia (Yin-ch'uan)-Tung-hsin	210
Ninghsia-Shan-pa (in Inner Mongolia)	325
Ninghsia-Ho-chia-chi (toward Lanchou)	240
4. Highways in Chinghai:	
Hsining-Hsiang-tang section	110
Hsining-Kuei-teh	108
Hsining-Lin-hsia (in Kansu)	190
Hsining-Tu-lan (toward Tun-huang)	428
Hsining-Ta-ho-pa (toward Yu-shu)	327
5. Highways in Sinkiang:	
Urumchi-Hami-Hsin-hsin-chia	835
Urumchi-Wusu-Ili (toward Russia)	691

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(Wang, Chin-fu. Hsi-pei ti ti-wen yü jen-wen Huang, Fen-sheng. 127-29; Pien-chiang tun-ken-yüan 126-28.)

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It is interesting to note that part of the highways in Kansu and all those in Sinkiang were built on the old trade routes. Highways in this region were centered at Sian, Lanchow, Ninghsia (Yin-chuan), Hsining and Urumchi.

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668 In Chinghai Province, three short lines were completed by
491 January, 1954, namely the renovated Lao-ya-hsia sector of the
499 Kansu-Chinghai Highway (Lanchow-Hsi-ning Highway), the sector
175 south of La-chi-shan on the Hsi-ning Kuei-teh Highway originally planned by the Nationalist Government, and the new Hsün-hua-Tung-jen Highway, with a total of 360 kilometers. Among the publicized trunk lines, the most notable one was the 2100 kilometer Hsi-ning-Lhasa Highway. The first part of this line was constructed along the old Chinghai-Sinkiang route, and was originally built by the Mohammedan leader Ma Pu-fang during 1946-1948 (from Sining to Chin-hung-shan), from Hsining to Gormo along the southern edge of the Tsaidam basin, then the highway turning south via Ku-ku-shih-li reached Chi-ting-si-lin, the common point of Chinghai, Sikang (now part of Szechwan) and Tibet, and thence leading to Lhasa in Tibet. The complete Hsi-ning-Lhasa Highway was opened to traffic on November 16, 1954. It linked with highways radiating northwest to Sinkiang and east to Lanchou, and met Sikang-Tibet Highway at Lhasa to keep close contact with the Southwestern provinces. Of the old roads, there was the Chinghai-Sinkiang Highway (Hsi-ning-Chin-hung-shan Highway) which was damaged before 1949, the Hsi-ning-Gormo section of about 800 kilometers which was restored in 1954 as part of the Hsi-ning-Lhasa Highway, and the rest repaired in May of 1955. Along the old Hsi-ning-Sikang route construction began in early May of 1955 on the Hsi-ning-Kuolo Highway of 627 kilometers leading to the Kuolo Tibetan National Autonomous District. Consisting of sections of the Hsi-ning-Hua-shih-hsia (424 kms.) and Hua-shih-hsia -Chi-mai (203 kms.), the Hsi-ning-Kuolo line was completed in November, 1955. The completion of these highways further facilitated the interflow of supplies between the agricultural and pastoral areas and supported the economic construction of the national minorities.

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491 In Sinkiang, the traditional arterial highways were centered at Urumchi. To the south, one highway at Kurle was divided into two branches and met again in the west at Kashgar to form a circle link around the Taklamakan desert; to the east the highway led through Turfan, Hami toward Lanchou; to the north, a line ran along the Manas River to Sharasume (Cheng-hua); and to the west there were two highways stretching to the Sino-Soviet border, one to Ho-cheng and the other to Ta-cheng. Along the Old Silk Road, from No-chiang, one highway was extended eastward to Tun-huang in Kansu. There were three highways connecting Urumchi with Russia through Ta-cheng, Hocheng, and Kashgar, to link with the Soviet-Turksib Railway stations at Ayaguz, Ilisk, and Andizhan respectively.

C. Civil Aviation

*668 509 [473] [648] *[795] The Chinese Communist Civil Aviation Company, which until the end of 1955 was a Sino-Soviet jointly-owned corporation and was still entirely adjusted to the Russian system, raised its service from two to four trips a week from Lanchou via Chiu-chuan, Hami to Urumchi. There was another flight twice a week, continuing the route from Lanchou to Sian where two sub-lines existed, one to Peking and the other southbound to Chungking. A third flight, also twice a week, connected Urumchi with Alma Ata through Ili by the Sino-Soviet international route; and the fourth was running inside Sinkiang from Urumchi via Kucha, Aksu to Kashgar.

IV. Conclusion

*668 489 433 The influential role which the development of transportation and communications can play in the creation of a favorable climate for sustained national economic growth, needs no elaboration. The Northwest which contains many of China's untapped mineral resources, and where the potential of agricultural development is fairly high, is a region where the man-resource ratio is low and the long-run economic potential is promising, provided it is linked with the populous regions of China and the outside world by better transport and a modern system of communications.

*668 489 499 198 Transportation and communications development in Northwest China used to lag far behind the other regions as did its agriculture and industry. After the establishment of the Communist regime, transportation construction activities in this area have increased greatly in the form of railway and highway construction. Of the total railway construction in Red China from 1950 to 1955, newly-built roads in the Northwest amounted to thirty per cent. Meanwhile the Lanchou-Sinkiang Railway, Lanchou-Pao-t'ou Railway and Chengtu-Paoki Railway were still under way and the Lanchou-Chinghai Railway was projected for 1956.

*668 • 491 648 Highways were constructed or renovated mostly along the old routes already in existence prior to 1949, some of which might not have been motor roads. Among them the most notable ones were the Hsi-ning-Tibet Highway, Sian-Lanchou-Urumchi Highway, Ansi-Tun-huang-No-chiang-Ho-tien-Kashgar Highway and the Hsi-ning-Chin-hung-shan-No-chiang-Kashgar Highway. Three international highways starting at Urumchi across the Sino-Soviet border linked up with the stations on the Soviet Turksib Railways.

*668 648 509 Air transportation was to be established to strengthen the Sino-Soviet relationship from Peking to Moscow via Sian, Lanchou, and Urumchi.

*668 489 433 It is true that Chinese Communists had devoted much attention to construction in the Northwest area, especially in the phase of transportation and communication. Aside from their shrewdness

in understanding the long-run economic potential of this region, it is equally true that there must have been some other reasons forcing them to develop this remote region more swiftly than they might otherwise have done, investing in it sizable amounts of much needed capital backed by considerable forced labor. Other factors, both internal and external, should therefore be taken into consideration. In the first place, Communist China had made a tremendous effort to shift the center of its gravity from the coastal regions into these relatively empty lands bordering Soviet central Asia, perhaps partly as a result of the United Nations embargo and the Korean War. Secondly, the forced pace of development in the Northwest might be partly a defense measure. During the War in Korea it became clear how vulnerable Manchuria was to bombing attacks. Had the United Nations chosen to do so, most of Manchuria's industrial complexes could have been destroyed. But in the Northwest, factories, railways and mines were far safer than anywhere else in China. Moreover, this area would assure maximum secrecy for projects which Red China and Russia were reported to have been jointly undertaking. ("I Saw Communist China" by Robert Guillain in the Saturday Evening Post, June 2, 1956. p. 114.)

Following on the heels of the railway construction work, a huge oil refinery at Lanchou was built. It is also reported that between Lanchou and the site of the refinery, a road was constructed more than twice as wide as Fifth Avenue in New York city, and a large hill thickly covered with houses was completely leveled to make the road straight. At Lanchou the railway yard under construction contained fifty kms. of tracks, with modern equipment such as turntables, grain silos, refrigerating plants and the like, all brought from Russia. Along the wide road, the beginning of what is called New Lanchou has arisen. In Sinkiang, a new city was born in Urumchi, where giant factories have been built, including the Sinkiang Non-ferrous Metals Co., the Sinkiang Petroleum Co., the Sinkiang "August 1st" Iron and Steel Plant, the Sinkiang Machinery Plant, the October Motor Car Repair and Assembly Shop, the Urumçhi Automatic Electric Plant, and the like. This accomplishment in industrial construction and future plans of industrial development are indeed very much tied up with communications development.

Communist China may very well focus its principal attention on the Northwest during the period of its second Five Year Plan scheduled to begin in 1958, just as the first Five Year Plan concentrated on the Northeast. The Northwest might then play a major role in the economic relations between China and Russia, and be industrialized to a level comparable with Manchuria.

It may therefore be concluded that so long as there are both internal and external pressures, and the "lean-to-one-side"

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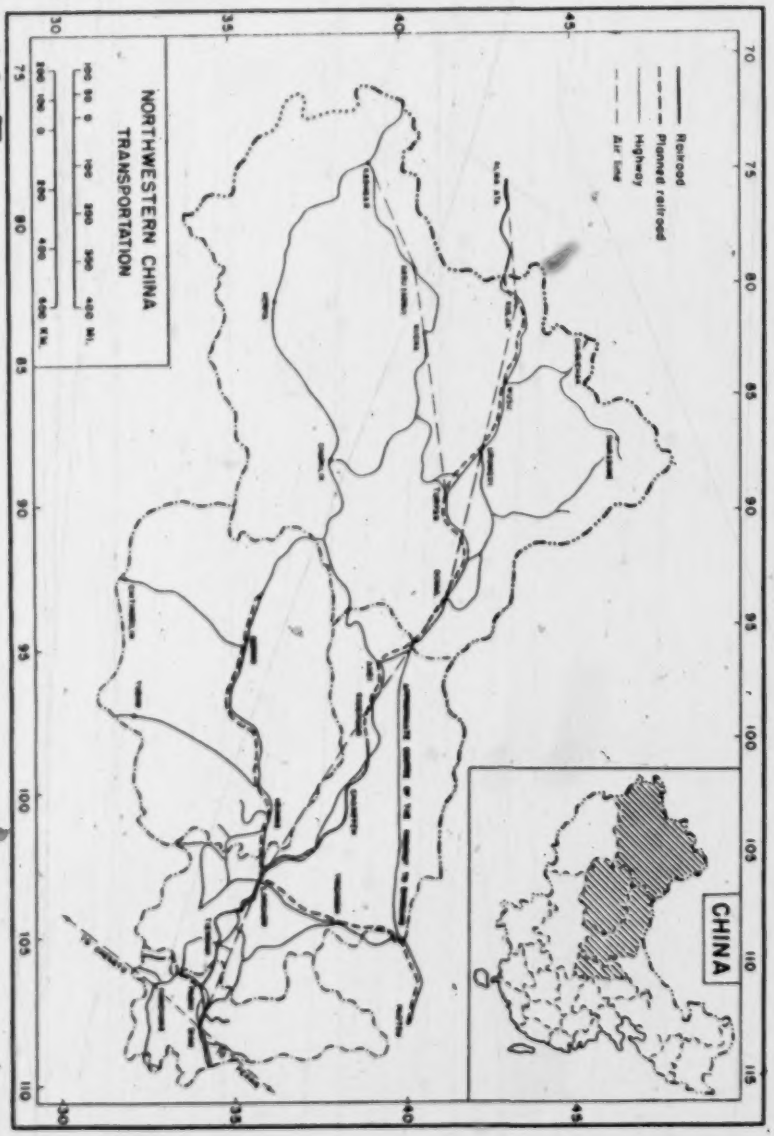

[following page 704]

2: Teichman G-5 (1919) 1921 AF13 Northwest China AF13

minded foreigner is apt to find it intensely wearisome. 493
A pony which can pace a little (the five mile an hour amble, 516
in Chinese, *tsou*) provides on the whole the least tiring method of travel in the North Western provinces; chairs are little used except in the Southern portions, and always entail trouble in getting bearers. We used ponies and pack mules throughout our journeys.

Leaving Kuanyint'ang there is a drop into a ravine and 487
then a stiff climb of a few hundred feet to reach the pass 491
over a range of mountains, the watershed between the Lo 133
and Yellow rivers. This ridge is really the end of one of the principal ranges of the Ch'inling Shan, the one which runs east and west right across Shensi immediately south of the Wei River. From the pass the road descends through undulating country to the township of Changmao Chen, where one is once more in the loess. From here it crosses a loess plateau, with typical valley rifts on either side, finally descending for the last mile to the village of Tzuchung. Changmao and Tzuchung, called 40 and 65 li from Kuanyint'ang respectively, are both used as stages for halts, but if the journey to Hsian is to be done in good time it is best to try and reach Shen Chou, another 50 li further on, on the first day's march. The road descends through deep loess cuttings to reach the latter, a little city on the banks of the Yellow River.

The traffic on the road is immense and an almost [484] constant stream of carts and pack mules, laden mostly with cotton and hides on their way from Shensi to the coast, is met. In wet weather the mud is appalling; in dry weather the dust is if anything worse. There may be a happy mean, but the traveller who strikes it can consider himself lucky. The first time we travelled this road was in the mud; the second time, during the dry weather in early April, in the dust. In such weather the road is entirely hidden in vast clouds of dust in which the traffic is permanently shrouded. Those who have had experience of loess dust, which is so fine that it can be almost rubbed into the pores of the skin, will know what this means. The horseman can sometimes get away from the main road and its ankle-deep layer of dust by following small paths through the fields; but the passengers in carts and mule litters have to put up with it

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and not infrequently arrive at T'ungkuan in a state of collapse.

From Shen Chou to Lingpao Hsien, a distance of 45 li, the road runs through deep cuttings in the loess near the right bank, but out of sight, of the Yellow River; and from Lingpao to Wenhsiang Hsien, called 60 li, it runs across a series of bluffs high up above the river; for the first 20 li of this latter stage horsemen can follow a footpath along the river itself, which here rolls its pea-soupy waters through a gorge in the loess hills; wild fowl of all kinds abound here in the spring and can be easily shot. Lingpao and Wenhsiang lie right on the river. Round the latter the loess is much mixed with sand. The barrier range on the traveller's left hand here begins to draw in towards the Yellow River to form the famous narrows at T'ungkuan. From Wenhsiang to T'ungkuan, called 60 li, the road continues through the loess not far from the river. Finally T'ungkuan itself is approached through a deep cutting in the loess hills with gates and walls appearing at intervals after the manner of the Nank'ou Pass in the Peking mountains, with which this famous stronghold may be compared.

487 712 The narrows of T'ungkuan are formed by the Northern barrier range of the Ch'inling Shan and the Yellow River, which here approach to within a few miles of one another, the intervening space being filled by a thick layer of loess hundreds of feet deep, intersected by impassable rifts. Here the Peking road through Shansi *via* T'aiyuan Fu meets the Honan road and continues as one to Hsian Fu, where it bifurcates again, one branch leading south-west to Chengtu and Tibet, and the other north-west to Lanchow and Turkestan. The fortress of T'ungkuan commands the meeting-point of these four highways, and is now and always has been one of the most important strategical points in the interior of China. It will one day be also a considerable railway centre as trunk lines are projected along all these roads. The number of roads leading east and west, north of the Yangtzu, is extraordinarily small, and railways usually seem to find that the ancient highways of traffic and commerce offer the easiest routes through mountainous country. T'ungkuan has from time immemorial served as the gateway from China to Central and Western Asia, and has played

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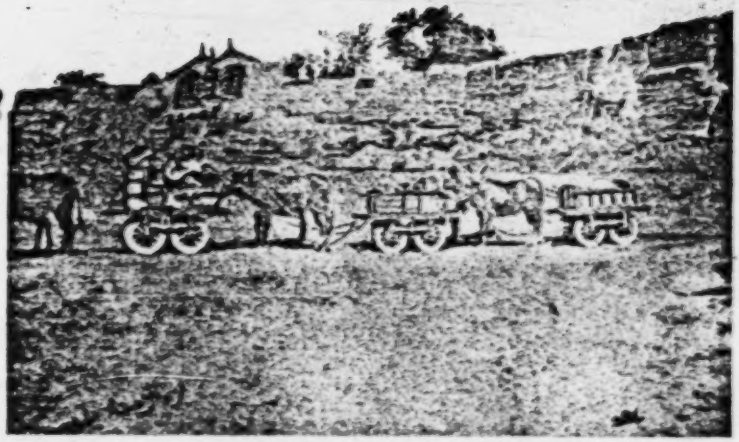
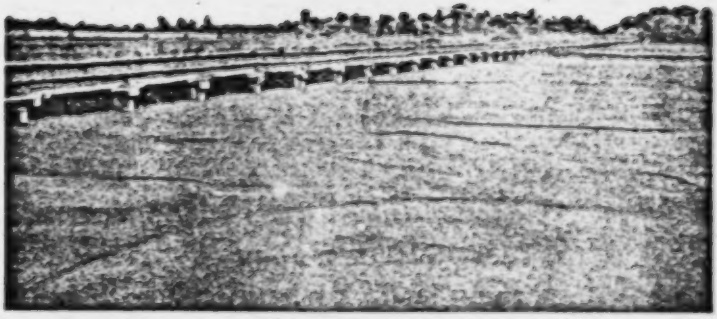
PLATE II

493



FOUR-WHEELED OX CARTS NEAR T'UNGKUAN

491



STONE BRIDGE ON THE ROAD TO HSIAN FU

[Facing p. 5]

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From T'ungkuan to Hsian is a distance of 290 li, which

491 can be covered in three long marches. The road, a broad tree-lined cart track, lies up the valley plain of the Wei River, with the great barrier range of the Ch'inling Shan on the left hand and the river on the right. The plain is [512] one vast wheat-field, dotted with peculiar walled farms, each a formidable little fortress in itself; they are relics of the 563 great Mahomedan rebellion and form a characteristic feature of the landscape in most parts of Shensi and Kansu. Nowadays the Mahomedans of Shensi are a negligible quantity, the majority having withdrawn westwards into Kansu, where they form an exceedingly important and powerful element in the population.

361 Forty li from T'ungkuan the district city of Huayin 788 Hsien is reached, the inns lying in the suburb of Huayin Miao, five li east of the walled town. This latter village is the starting-point for the sacred mountain, the Hua Shan, a portion of the Ch'inling range. Seventy li further on the empty city of Hua Chou is passed, and 50 li beyond that Weinan Hsien, the centre of a particularly rich agricultural district, is reached.

484 The traffic on the roads of this fertile and populous plain is very great, and it is one of the absurdities of modern China that no railway should yet connect Hsian, the 000 metropolis of the North West, with the coast. Railway construction on the plains of Central Shensi means little more than laying the rails on the necessary embankment and building a number of small bridges across the streams which flow down from the Ch'inling Shan into the Wei River. And while these rich and populous plains in the centre of China are innocent of every vestige of railway construction, a line has been built at great difficulty and expense through the mountains north of Peking past Kalgan to end in the air beyond Tatung in Northern Shensi. The Hsian line is a section of the Belgian Lung Hai railway referred to above, which has for the moment come to a stop at Kuanyint'ang in Honan. Failing railways the construction of a few good trunk roads fit for motor traffic would be of enormous advantage to the province and could be undertaken, as far as the plains of Central Shensi are concerned, at comparatively small cost. There can scarcely be another civilized country in the world which would be

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The local magistrate then has to admit that there is certainly a road to Lonan, but adds that it passes over a terrible mountain. Further enquiries show that it is of course a much used trail of two stages of 90 li each.

We left T'ungkuan at daybreak on April 9th, an immense procession of ponies, mules, chairs, baggage coolies, soldiers, and miscellaneous hangers-on, of which my share amounted to three riding ponies and five pack mules. There are no cart roads in Shensi south of the Ch'inling Shan, and the Chinese always travel where possible in chairs. Having tried all methods of travel in North China I have come to the conclusion that a pacing pony with an American saddle and mules for the baggage are best and quickest, comparative rapidity of movement being an important point in the avoidance of undue fatigue; this method of travel is also far cheaper than chairs and baggage coolies and entails a minimum of friction over transport arrangements. But the tracks of Southern Shensi are very hard on the animals, and it is advisable to carry a good supply of shoes and to have a man in the caravan who can put them on.

The trail runs due south for 40 li ascending gradually over the loess foothills to the hamlet of Haoch'ayu lying at the mouth of a gloomy gorge in the rocky barrier range of mountains which bound the Wei River valley on the south. This range, the backbone of China, starts from the highlands of Northern Tibet and finally loses itself in the plains of Honan, serving all the way as the watershed between the Yangtzu and Yellow River basins, and marking the dividing line between Central and North China; that is to say between rice-eating peoples who cultivate alluvial valleys with water buffaloes and employ coolies for transport, and wheat-eating peoples who cultivate loess plains and uplands and use ponies, mules, and camels for transport. We call these mountains Ch'inling, which is really the Chinese name for the passes across the watershed range.

Entering the narrow stony gorge we followed it for about 20 li till it ended in a steep zigzag climb leading to the pass, which like most passes in China is not a saddle but just the ordinary ridge of the range crossed at the most direct point. Chinese trails always prefer where possible to go straight from point to point across the intervening obstacle rather

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mountains, pine trees, and clear streams flowing through narrow cultivated valleys abounding in pheasants. 487

The following day we crossed another low pass, the boundary between Shang Chou and Shanyang districts, and then followed down a winding ravine for the rest of the way to Shanyang Hsien. The latter is a tiny place hidden away in a wilderness of red sandstone hills and mountains. 133

At Shanyang we struck a recognized road of sorts leading south to a place called Manch'uan Kuan on the Hupei border, whence boats can be taken down a stream called the Chia Ho across a corner of N.W. Hupei to Paiho Hsien on the Han River, and thence up stream again to Hsingan. To get into a boat wherever possible is the aim of every Chinese traveller, which, though rarely attainable in North China, is very natural considering the state of the so-called roads and the hardships of long overland journeys, and my Chinese companions were unanimous in discovering that this was the only possible route to Hsingan. But the object of our journey being—to use the expression of one of my French-speaking colleagues from the Wai Chiao Pu—"de parcourir toute la province de Shensi aussi rapidement que possible," I had no intention of taking a boat journey across N.W. Hupei, nor to waste a week in being dragged up the Han from Paiho Hsien to Hsingan; and therefore announced Chenan Hsien to be the next stage in our journey, this place lying to the S.W. and appearing to offer an alternative route. This produced a flood of expostulations and protests in regard to the difficulties of that road, which subsequently proved not unfounded. The district magistrate on being referred to admitted that there was quite a good trail to Chenan, and said that the difficulties of this route were reported to lie between the latter place and Hsingan. However, adhering to our usual practice, we made Chenan, distant about 230 li, three days' march, our immediate objective. 487 491 505 487 133

The first stage was an easy one of about 60 li. The trail lay down the valley for three hours' march to a point where the latter ended abruptly in an impassable gorge, and then turned up a ravine to the west, which was followed to a low pass with a steep descent the other side to the hamlet of Niuerhch'uan, lying in a small valley in the usual red sandstone mountains.

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tiring. A path fit for carrying coolies is ledged in the cliff side, but mules and ponies have to pick their way over the stones and boulders in the stream bed, constantly crossing and recrossing the river, which is only just fordable, as it washes the base of the cliffs alternately on either side. The following day's march, called 60 li, to the village of Hsiaoho K'ou is precisely the same and most tiring. The district of Hsünyang is entered rather more than half-way near a picturesque temple overhanging the water. Hsiaoho K'ou lies at a point where the river, making the most intricate turns and twists on itself and almost surrounding a precipitous hill crowned by a fine *chaitzu*, is joined by a tributary from the east.

Ten li lower down, at a hamlet called Liangho Kuan, the Ch'ienyu Ho is joined by another stream from the west called the Hsün Ho, which issues from a similar gloomy gorge in the mountains. This latter river seems to contain the greater volume of water and is considered the main stream.

From Liangho Kuan small boats can descend the Hsün Ho to its junction with the Han at Hsünyang Hsien, whence the latter can be reascended to Hsingan. It was of course suggested by everyone that we should here take to boats, but as it would have taken about a week to get to Hsingan by water as against three days by road across the mountains, we decided to continue overland. Since the trail continued, however, to descend the river gorges for another 40 li, we were able to avail ourselves of boats for that distance. The magistrate of Hsünyang had provided a regular flotilla for our huge party, and the boatmen were obviously relieved to find that we were only going to take them for a short distance instead of descending to the Han; for the supply of boats was of course a sort of official corvée for which they got little or no remuneration. The best boat, a brand new one, had been laboriously dragged up the rapids of the Hsün Ho and hidden away round a bend to prevent its being impressed; but the magistrate's underlings soon got wind of it and it was unearthed together with its morose and disappointed owner, and placed at our disposal. As our mules and ponies were all tired and footsore from the rough trails they had been travelling on, I tried to ship them

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for a rest; but having embarked them with difficulty in the largest boat, the boatmen pronounced it too dangerous a proposition in the rapids, and they had to continue their overland scramble. We had a pleasant journey downstream, passing through deep gorges and shooting a succession of small rapids, but as we ran aground periodically it took about three hours to do the 40 li to the village of Chaochia Wan, where the gorges open out into a pleasant little valley with cultivated slopes dotted with wood oil trees.

At Chaochia Wan the Hsingan trail leaves the gorge of the Hsün Ho to cut across the mountains to the S.W. for two days' march. The first stage to the village of Map'ing Ho is only 50 li, but it is a hard day's march. It is only when one starts to climb out of these Han valley gorges that one realises their depth. For three hours after leaving Chaochia Wan we scrambled up a mountain side, most of the way too steep to ride, in a downpour of rain. On reaching the pass (about 4200 feet) the weather cleared somewhat, allowing fleeting views through the clouds over a maze of wild reddish mountains patched with trees and jungle vividly green in their spring foliage. From the pass there was a steep drop of a few li, like the ascent by slippery clay paths and flights of irregular stone steps, then an easy descent along a ridge, and finally a precipitous drop straight down the mountain side to the hamlet of Map'ing Ho lying in a ravine running S.E.

From here there was only one stage left, called 90 li, to Hsingan. The magistrate of the latter city, who met us here, suggested an early start, as the 90 li were, he said, "very big and over several mountains." Fortunately we took his advice, for what with the passes, the badness of the road, and the rain, we were nearly twelve hours *en route*.

Leaving the valley of Map'ing Ho the trail enters a defile to the S.W. which leads up to a pass (3300 feet), the boundary between Hsünyang and Hsingan districts, and then drops down into a stony gorge which is followed to the hamlet of Liuli Kou. From this place there are still 60 li left to Hsingan, and the weary traveller feels entitled to hope for a run down the valley for the rest of the way. But it is still the same story of an endless succession of ridges trending from N.W. to S.E. across a road running S.W. and

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countries. Yet a series of macadamized trunk roads would be an inestimable boon politically and economically to the country and the people and could be constructed at a comparatively small cost; some of the large sums spent annually for the upkeep of unnecessary military forces in the various provinces might with great advantage be diverted to this end.

Leaving Hsingan the Han River is crossed by a ferry above the city and the trail then runs westwards up the valley plain of the Yo River, which is navigable for small boats from Hanyin down. Its valley forms a rich little alluvial plain growing rice and wheat and supporting many farms and villages, and offering an admirable route for a railway westwards, which can thus avoid the gorges of the Han in this neighbourhood. To the south a range of mountains rises steeply to a height of a few thousand feet, separating this little plain from the Han River, while to the north the valley slopes up to low hills of red clay backed by mountains. Seventy li from Hsingan the township of Hengk'ou is reached, the end of the first stage, situated at the junction of the Yo River with the Heng River from the north. It has the honour of being the native place of the present Military Governor of the Province, General Ch'en Shu-fan, the old rule, which has many advantages, that an official is debarred from serving in his native province, no longer holding good.

From Hengk'ou to Hanyin is called 110 li, but the road is good and the li very short (at least four to the mile), so that with ponies and pack mules the distance can easily be done in a day. The Chinese li is commonly considered to be the equivalent of a third of a mile, which, however, is only the case in out of the way parts of Kansu. Elsewhere north of the Ch'inling Shan ten li to three miles may be taken as a fairly accurate average. In the upper Han valley, as in Szechuan, the li averages about four to a mile, or even more in the mountains; the difference north and south of the Ch'inling Shan being probably due to the use of animal and coolie transport in those regions respectively.

Ten li beyond Hengk'ou the hills close in on the river to form a *kuan*, or barrier, and the path crosses a low spur to descend again into the valley, here less than a mile in width, up which it continues past several large villages, crossing and recrossing the stream by fords, for the rest of the way to Hanyin.

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Hanyin T'ing, now called Hanyin Hsien, a third class district, is a prosperous little place lying at the head of the fertile Yo River valley, and, like most of the Han basin towns, is more like a Szechuan than a Shensi city.

From Hanyin to Shihch'uan Hsien is a day's march, called 90 li. The path continues westwards up the narrowing valley leaving the main stream which comes down from the north on the right hand. After about 15 li the valley ends in low hills skilfully terraced into rice fields, up which the trail runs to reach a low divide, some 600 feet above and two hours' march from Hanyin. This is the first obstacle to a Hsingan-Hanchung railway, but from here on till it reaches the eastern end of the Hanchung plain near Yang Hsien there will be many difficulties to surmount. From the pass the track, entering the district of Shihch'uan, descends through a defile and then through terraced rice fields amongst the red clay hills to the valley of the Ch'ih Ho, a stream flowing down from the north, and reaches the township of Ch'ihho P'u, 45 li from Hanyin and at about the same elevation. The same mountain range, which is further on pierced by the Ch'ih Ho in a gorge, continues on the left hand and the same red clay hills on the right. The path continues down the valley for an hour's march, and then leaves it to climb over a spur to the north, and so into the valley of the Han, here no wider than the river bed, and flowing from north to south. For the rest of the way to Shihch'uan the trail runs up the Han along the mountain side on the left bank.

Shihch'uan, a third class Hsien, lies right on the river. It is an important strategic point in these parts as the trail from Hsian across the Ch'inling Shan *via* Ningshan T'ing here debouches on to the Han and the Hsingan-Hanchung road.

The next stage to Ch'a Chen, called 80 li, is a rather dangerous one for pack animals. Crossing the Han by a ferry the trail runs up the gorges of the Han, a smaller edition of those of the upper Yangtzu, being ledged in the cliff side some distance above the water. In places it is narrow and there are some corners which are difficult to negotiate; but we met with no accidents, partly because the assistance so constantly rendered to us by the local officials included repairs to bad and dangerous portions of the trail.

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than some of the veterans of the China Inland Mission, who have passed the best part of their lives in isolated stations in Shensi and Kansu, such as Hsingan, Hanchung, Fenghsiang, Lanchou, Liangchou, Hsining, and Ninghsia, where months and years pass by without their ever seeing another foreigner. Their success in securing converts may not have been striking, but it is permissible to speculate on whether those whom they have secured are not more genuine Christians than the native Catholics. Often in spite of the basest ingratitude on the part of the Chinese, whose wounds and illnesses they tend one day, only to be passed by in the street with a scowl on the next, these noble men have laboured on year after year doing good and leavening, in however small a degree, the leaden mass of Chinese materialism. The results of their work may not always be apparent now, but they have sown a seed which cannot fail in time to produce a harvest of some kind, a harvest of which other Missions not infrequently reap the benefit.

We spent the night at Kulupa, where we were most hospitably received and entertained with a banquet.

The distance to Hanchung is called 75 li. After descending for about an hour's march through gullies in the hills the track debouches on to the famous plain of Hanchung, a highly fertile, heavily cultivated, and densely populated region, stretching for a certain distance along both banks of the Han, and entirely surrounded by mountains. Another two hours' march across this plain, past the boundary between Ch'engku and Hanchung (Nanch'eng) districts, brings one to the Han River here a shallow stream flowing in a broad sandy bed, a hundred yards wide and a few feet deep. The path runs along the banks of the Han for a short distance, and then, crossing by a ferry, continues for ten li over the plain to reach the busy township of Shihpali P'u. This village, which, as its name implies, is 18 li from Hanchung, is developing into a large town, and is evidently the centre of the through trade from Szechuan, Kansu, and Northern Shensi, which, as is usually the case in China, is driven to avoid the capital by the various tolls and dues. From here the road runs west for the rest of the way to Hanchung, passing through a rich suburb to reach the East Gate of the city.

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road, here a good cart track, runs across an undulating wheat prairie, dotted with hamlets and walled farms, with the Wei River out of sight on the right hand, and the great barrier of the Ch'inling mountains on the left. Three townships are passed, Yapei, Hengch'u, and Huaiya, the second being of some interest as the home of a famous Sung Dynasty philosopher. The amount of wheat grown on these plains of Central Shensi is very great, especially nowadays since the suppression of opium cultivation. There is no better wheat flour in China than that of Shensi, and it forms the staple food of the population, eaten in the form of bread (*mo*) and macaroni (*kua mien*). With this excellent wheat flour, good mutton, and plenty of game in the mountains, the foreign traveller is well off as regards food. A sound rule for travel in the interior of China is to avoid all tinned foods and rely on native supplies cooked in foreign style; the former only increase one's baggage loads and are quite unnecessary; native food made up in the native style is unappetising to most foreigners as well as being dangerously dirty.

Mei Hsien, a second class district city, is a small place, but like Chouchih is the centre of a rich agricultural region comprising the plain between the Ch'inling Shan and the River Wei. The latter flows a few li to the north of the town. The city has suffered greatly from rebellions and brigandage during recent years.

From Mei Hsien to Fenghsiang Fu is called 110 li, but the road being good and mostly level, the distance can be covered in one long march. The Wei River, in the dry season a thick yellow stream a hundred yards wide and few feet deep, is crossed by a ferry and the road then runs westwards with the river on the left hand and a loess bluff on the right for 35 li to the village of Ts'aichia P'o. At the time of our visit this low-lying land was almost entirely devoted to indigo and dotted with the peculiar-looking brick pits in which the plants are mashed in preparing the dye. This is an old industry revived on account of the scarcity of aniline dyes. The indigo forms a useful rotation crop for the relief of the land exhausted by the everlasting wheat. We saw little else but wheat, cotton, and indigo during our tour of the loess of Central Shensi, growing on

T.T. the uplands, river plains, and irrigated lands respectively.

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the uplands, river plains, and irrigated lands respectively. Leaving Ts'aichia P'o the road climbs the loess bluff to the north, emerging on an undulating plain 500 feet above the river, this being about the usual thickness of the loess deposits in Western Shensi, and then runs N.E. across wheat-growing prairies, past numerous hamlets and walled farms, ascending gradually to reach Fenghsiang Fu.

Fenghsiang Fu, now a first class Hsien, lies at the western end of the open Wei valley, where the mountains of the Kansu border meet the Ch'inling Shan and bring these fertile loess plains to an end. It is a large city and used to be quite an important place, but its commercial prosperity, destroyed during the rebellions and other troubles of the past six years, has not yet revived. The inhabitants have a bad reputation, and, like the town of Paochi on the Wei River a day's journey to the south, it has in the past been a hotbed of the Ko Lao Hui. Its position near the junction of the Ch'in Chou road into Kansu and the high road to Szechuan gives it some importance, and cart tracks radiate from it across the plain in all directions, ceasing abruptly at the foot of the mountains.

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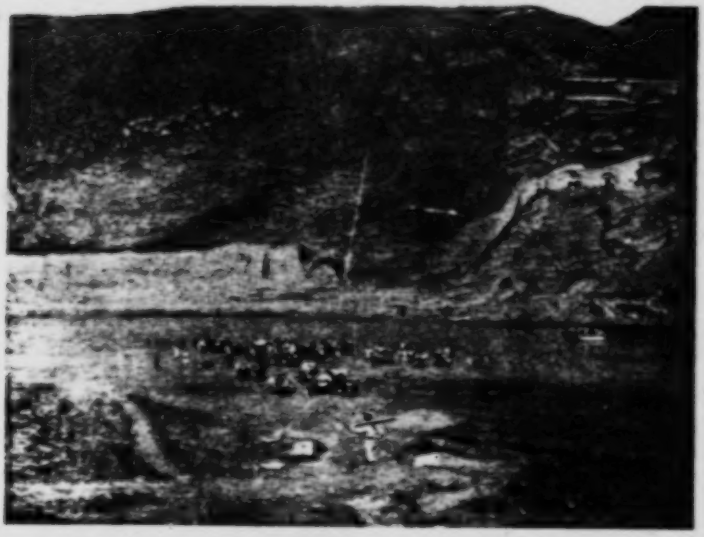
PLATE XII

133

CANYON OF THE CHING RIVER, WESTERN SHENSI

491



FERRY ACROSS THE CHING RIVER

[FACING P. 53]

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and levy blackmail on the villages. The north of Shensi on the other hand was at the time of our visit in the hands of organized troops of brigands of a semi-political character, *robbers one day, rebels the next, and perhaps successful* revolutionaries the next.

At Yao Chou we struck the main trail from Hsian Fu to Yenan, Suitê, Yülin, and the north of the province generally; with the exception of the little known and seldom used track by which we returned it is the only trail connecting Central and Northern Shensi. As far as Yenan and Yench'ang it is passable for carts, having been constructed at considerable cost for the transport of the Japanese oil-drilling machinery to Yench'ang in 1906, and again repaired by the Americans during their oil-drilling venture eight years later. This road might at comparatively small cost be made passable for motor traffic, and had the American enterprise succeeded would doubtless long since have been made so. As it is, it nowadays leads into a depopulated, brigand-infested region where there is no trade and traffic, and is gradually reverting to the condition of an ordinary Chinese trail. But it is an example of the ease with which a comparatively good cart track can be constructed through mountainous country, where, without the stimulus of a foreign interest, the Chinese would for ever remain content with the usual villainous mule trail.

The first stage from Yao Chou is a short one, called 60 li, to T'ungkuan Hsien, and lies up the valley to the N.E., which, except at one point about half-way where it contracts into a gorge, is cultivated and bounded by low hills of loess. T'ungkuan is a little third class district city lying at the foot of the first of the mountain ranges which cross Northern Shensi from N.W. to S.E.

The next day's march is from T'ungkuan Hsien to Yichün Hsien, a distance of 80 li. The track runs up the valley to the north, the loess hills gradually becoming more rocky and less cultivated, for 25 li to the barrier hamlet of Chinso Kuan, where an old wall and fort guard the entrance to a gorge. Here the loess is left behind and scrub-covered mountains are entered through a winding gorge, which leads by an easy ascent after three hours' march to the hamlet of Liehch'uan, lying on the top of the range at a height of

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ness" of this road, and certainly what with the ravages of brigands and the natural infertility of the soil, the few inhabitants were poor to the verge of starvation. Yenan seems to be the centre of the most desolate area, by far the poorest region I have traversed in China outside the actual deserts.

Chungpu, a poor little third class district city half in ruins, lies on the side of a hill, with a sacred grove of very ancient trees behind it, which present a remarkable sight in this treeless country. Near by is a small temple containing the tomb of the Emperor Huang Ti, who reigned some 4000 years ago, which illustrates the great antiquity of these little Shensi towns.

The next day's stage to Loch'uan Hsien is a trying march through the loess. The track follows down the valley to the east for 20 li, and then turning north climbs up through a gully on to the plateau a few hundred feet above, across which it runs for an hour's march to the hamlet of Antzu T'ou, whence it drops into the valley of the Lo River. This stream resembles the Ching Ho, a muddy torrent twenty yards wide, and flows in a narrow valley some hundreds of feet below the level of the loess plateau. It is crossed by a ferry at the hamlet of Chiaoho K'ou, and the path then climbs steeply out of the valley again and runs across the plateau in a N.E. direction for three hours' march to reach the district city of Loch'uan. The latter is the usual little third class Hsien city of Northern Shensi, but appeared to be rather more prosperous than its neighbours and to show less signs of the ravages of brigands. It lies on the loess plateau, intersected as usual by colossal rifts, the heads of some of which are so close to the city that they threaten to engulf it in a few years time. These towns and villages on the loess plateau are quite unapproachable except by the existing roads owing to the rifts which open up all around, and could be held by a few men against an army; perhaps that is why Loch'uan appeared comparatively immune from brigand raids.

From Loch'uan to Fu Chou is another exhausting march in the loess of 75 li. The track runs N.E. across the plateau for an hour's march until it is held up by a huge cañon with the usual perpendicular walls. Climbing in and out of

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through the cities of T'ungchou Fu and Weinan Hsien across the plains along the Yellow River, but we followed a slightly longer route further north across the loess uplands *via* Hoyang, Ch'engch'eng, P'uch'eng, Fup'ing, and Sanyuan, a week's journey by a good and mostly level trail. The season of the year was now late June and the rains had not yet broken, so we expected a scorching hot journey across these plains; but fortunately we struck the season of high winds which blow for a few days before the rains break, and had quite a pleasant journey until the last day or two, when we were overtaken by the opening downpours of the rainy season and had a hard struggle to get across the waterlogged plain of the Wei River.

From Hanch'eng Hsien to Hoyang Hsien is a long march called 95 li. The road, now a good cart track, leaves Hanch'eng by the South Gate, and crossing a fine stone bridge runs down the valley through indigo fields for 20 li, where it debouches on to the Yellow River at the township of Chihch'uan Chen, a prosperous little city with an important likin station tapping the trade with Shansi. This place, like many other non-official townships we passed on the road to Hsian, is larger and wealthier than any district city we saw in Northern Shensi. At Chihch'uan the road leaves the Yellow River and climbs up on to the loess plateau some hundreds of feet above, across which it runs south-west and west, past the townships of Pailiang Chen (in Hoyang district) and T'ungchia Chuang, a centre of the vegetable oil industry, and many smaller villages, for the rest of the way to Hoyang. This plateau is just like all the other loess uplands, an undulating wheat prairie intersected by rifts and valleys; and the passage of two of these cañons hundreds of feet deep makes the march a long and arduous one.

Hoyang is a fairly large city, the centre of a first class district; but it is a poor-looking place inside, like most of these purely agricultural prairie towns, and is not to be compared with Hanch'eng, which probably does a good deal of trade with prosperous Shansi. It lies in a slight depression of the rolling loess uplands, now covered with short wheat stubble. Supplies of all kinds are abundant on this road, but game is scarce; though an occasional pheasant was to be seen in the bare fields.

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From Hoyang to Ch'engch'eng, a short march of 45 li, the trail runs west across the same undulating plains, traversing two deep cañons *en route*. Ch'engch'eng, a second class district city, is a replica of Hoyang.

The next stage to P'uch'eng is a very long march, called 105 li, probably over 30 miles, for the li are long on these prairies. The trail runs south across the plain past numerous hamlets, descending gradually, for three to four hours' march, and then drops by easy gradients in the loess terraces to the walled township of Yungfeng Chen, 50 li from Ch'engch'eng, in the valley of the Lo River. These little walled towns often have the characters for their names inscribed over the gateway, like stations on a railway, a custom which is most useful to the traveller, and which I have not noticed elsewhere.

Five li west of Yungfeng the Lo River, at low water a few feet deep and fifteen yards wide, and of the consistency of liquid mud, is crossed by a ferry. The Lo here flows from north to south; on the right bank rises a loess bluff a few hundred feet high, and on the left the open valley some miles wide stretches up by easy slopes and low terraces to the level of the plateau. From the ferry the trail ascends the bluff constituting the edge of the tableland, and then runs west across the usual undulating wheat prairies, dotted with walled farms and villages, for the rest of the way to P'uch'eng.

P'uch'eng lies in the open plain backed by low mountains about ten miles to the north. It is a large and important place, a first class district city and the centre of a great wheat-growing region. Many prominent men in Shensi have their homes in the district, which therefore, in these days of home rule, exercises considerable influence in the province. These large first class districts in the loess of Central Shensi, such as P'uch'eng, Lint'ung, Weinan, and Fup'ing, the very heart of ancient China, have always been proverbial for their agricultural wealth, and to this day the provincial Government subsists largely off their land tax revenues.

From P'uch'eng to Fup'ing, another long march of 95 li, the trail continues west across the same undulating prairies past many villages including the township of

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PLATE XIX

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STONE CAUSEWAY ACROSS LOESS RIFT, E. SHENSI

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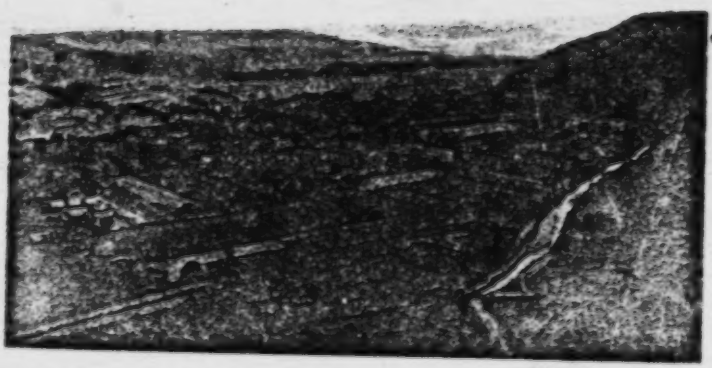

INDIGO FIELDS IN IRRIGATED LOESS VALLEY NEAR HANCH'ENG

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thoroughly sound and sensible policy. The conversion of the Chinese is a tough proposition; but there is a far tougher one confronting the missionary in the North West, and that is the conversion of the Mahomedans and Tibetans in Kansu. The Chinese is apathetic towards Christianity, while keeping an open mind towards any aspect of it which may be turned to his material advantage. The Tibetan or Mahomedan on the other hand is usually not at all apathetic, but very actively hostile towards any attempt to convert him.

From Sanyuan to Hsian Fu is a day's march, called 90 li by the Chinese owing to the passage of the two rivers which occupies an hour or so, and is therefore considered the equivalent of 10 li. For us it was a long slow march, floundering through the mud in pouring rain. The road runs due south across the plain, the pagoda of the village of Ch'ingyang T'a being a prominent landmark for the first 30 li. A few li beyond this village the Ching Ho is reached and crossed by a cart ferry, and another 15 li across a low table-land of loess dotted with the curious tumuli, some from fifty to one hundred feet high and said to be the tombs of ancient kings, brings one to the Wei River, varying from a few hundred yards to a mile in width according to the season, and crossed by a cart ferry. These plains along the Wei and Ching rivers are the great cotton-growing areas of Central Shensi. Cotton has always been a staple crop of the province, and is one of the principal exports. It is now being grown more extensively than ever and is being bought up for export by the Japanese. The soil and climate appear well suited to its cultivation, and there seems to be no reason why its quality should not be improved by scientific methods, nor why there should not be a big cotton spinning industry in Hsian and the neighbourhood. As it is the Japanese buy the cotton, take it to Japan to spin, and then return it to the Chinese in the form of yarn.

We found the Wei River in flood and had a hard time crossing it. The ferry took us over the main stream, but two branches in flood had to be forded with the water up to the ponies' bellies and running like a mill race. One of the carts accompanying us, containing the baggage of the soldiers, apparently drove into a hole and disappeared except for its hood; we were too much occupied at the time with our own

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ponies and mules and I never heard what happened to it or whether there was anyone inside. The Chinese pack saddle is made in two parts, the framework containing the baggage resting unattached on the saddle proper, an excellent system permitting of quick and easy loading and unloading; but it has the disadvantage that if the mule falls in fording a difficult river, his load is likely to disappear for good. A few li after crossing the Wei River the village of Tsaot'an is reached, whence the road continues south across the plain for 25 li to reach the north wall of Hsian Fu.

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CHAPTER VII

FROM HSIAN FU IN SHENSI TO CHENGTU FU IN SZECHUAN BY THE MAIN ROAD

The Szechuan road—The T'ung Ch'eng Railway—Hsienyang—Hsingp'ing—Wukung—Fufeng—Ch'ishan—Paochi—Shensi mules—Passage of Ch'inling Shan—Fenghsien—Loess—Feng Ling—Ch'aikuan Ling—Liupa—Paoch'eng—Manchu Restoration—Mienhsien—Gold in the Han mountains—Sources of Han River—Ningchiang—Entry into Szechuan—The Chialing Chiang and Kuangyuan—Chaohua—The narrows of Chienmen Kuan—Chienchou—Tzutung—Mienchou—Lochiang and the cities of the Chengtu plain—Chengtu—Szechuanese and Yunnanese.

487 FROM Hsian, the capital of Shensi, to Chengtu, the capital of Szechuan, by the main road is a distance of 2225 li, say a little over 500 miles (the li in this direction averaging about four to one mile). Travelling the regular stages, it is possible to cover this distance in less than a month, but as our caravan was rather exhausted by its long wanderings, and the heat was at times very oppressive, we journeyed slowly and with occasional rests, and took five to six weeks to reach Chengtu.

This road is about the most important overland route in China, though the traffic on it has somewhat diminished since the introduction of steamers on the upper Yangtzu between Ichang and Chungking, well-to-do travellers nowadays preferring to make a détour by way of Hankow and thus to avoid the hardships of so long an overland journey. As well as being the main and practically the only artery of communication between Shensi and Szechuan, it is a section of the great highway from Peking to Lassa. For the tourist who wishes to see the interior of China, a journey from Peking *via* Hsian to Chengtu by this road, and thence back by river to Shanghai, would provide a tour of great interest through some of the finest scenery in China Proper, besides entailing a minimum of the hardships inseparable from travel in the interior, supplies and accommodation being abundant all the way. After leaving the Wei valley it is a mule trail,

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paved most of the way and comparatively good in Szechuan, but very rough and rocky through the mountains of Shensi. Lying most of the way through Southern Shensi and Szechuan, where paved paths and flights of irregular stone steps are the rule, it is unsuitable for ponies, and it is advisable to take a chair, at any rate from the Han valley onwards. We started with ponies, having used them on all our journeys through the North West, but were compelled to take to chairs when we got into Szechuan, as the steps and paving stones knocked our ponies' feet to pieces. Walking and chairing is a pleasant enough method of travel, but very slow, the rate of progress in the mountains being only about eight li per hour, which makes the stages long.

The Belgians have secured a concession for the construction of a trunk railway from Tatung in Northern Shansi to Chengtu in Szechuan. It is a peculiar line to have chosen and one which will involve considerable engineering difficulties in Shensi and Szechuan. In nine cases out of ten the railway surveyor is unable to find a better trace for a line than that followed by an ancient highway of commerce, but if this railway is to follow the main trail between Hsian and Chengtu, its constructors are going to have a difficult job. The traveller by this road can therefore beguile the monotony of the journey by speculating as to the feasibility or otherwise of constructing a railway along it; it will certainly not be easy to find a less difficult route.

We left Hsian Fu on the 29th of June in a downpour of rain and floundered through the mud across the plain to reach Hsienyang Hsien, fortunately only 50 li away. This city, a poor-looking place in appearance though the centre of a first class district, is built along the northern bank of the Wei River, which is crossed by a cart ferry. It has some importance as being more or less the head of navigation on the Wei River, and as lying at the point where the great highway from Hsian, T'ungkuan, Peking, and the coast bifurcates, one branch continuing N.W. to Kansu and Turkestan, and the other turning W. and S.W. to Szechuan and Tibet. One cannot but speculate on the innumerable travellers who have passed through its miserable little main street, knee-deep in dust or mud, bound on their weary way to the outposts of Chinese rule in the deserts of

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hands of Peking and the Northern Generals, when it was over; and the power of the North to retain in its hands the nominal government of the country, though it has so far proved itself incapable of subduing the South and the South West in a military sense, remains the only decisive and stable factor in the situation.

From Paoch'eng to Mien Hsien is a distance of 90 li by a good road up the Han valley plain, dotted with many prosperous hamlets and villages; at the time of our passage it was largely under cotton where the land did not permit of irrigation for rice. Fifty li out a tributary river from the north is crossed by an iron chain suspension bridge and the large village of Huangsha P'u on the banks of the Han is reached. Further on another river from the mountains to the north has to be crossed by a ford, and though it was now the rainy season, the magistrate of Mien Hsien, who was travelling with us, assured us that its passage would present no difficulties, as he had crossed it coming to meet us on the previous day. But it had been raining all day, and rivers in Chin- are wont to increase and decrease in size with extraordinary rapidity. When we reached this particular stream we found, instead of the ford a foot deep, which we had been led to expect, a roaring torrent deeper than a man's height. A dilapidated little temple was discovered near by in which we made shift to camp for the night while waiting for the rain to stop and the waters to subside; but before darkness fell the magistrate's efforts resulted in a boat being secured, and we packed up again and started off to try and reach Mien Hsien that night. The passage of the river was a long business, but everything was got over in the end, and we continued our journey in the dark. The path seemed to run more or less along the banks of the Han, into which I nearly rode on more than one occasion, past t'.e township of Ts'aiyuan Chen, which is a larger place than the district city and evidently a trading centre connected with the junk traffic on the river; and ten li further on the East Gate of Mien Hsien is reached, where we arrived about nine in the evening, wet through and tired out.

Mien Hsien, a second class district city, lies at the extreme western end of the cigar-shaped Hanchung plain, which extends eastwards to below Yang Hsien. The out-

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[361] debouches into Szechuan and where another road emerges
487 from Kansu *via* P'ik'ou. Being a mountainous border
133 district it is full of brigands, who do not, however, seem so formidable or so destructive to trade as their colleagues in Northern Shensi; at any rate much traffic continues on the big road.

We were now at the end of July, and as we emerged from the higher mountains of Shensi into Szechuan the [136] heat became daily more terrific. Mosquitoes too, which are not noticeable in Kansu at all owing to the elevation, and which only begin to be bad in Shensi towards the autumn, became daily more voracious.

From Kuangyuan to Chaohua is a short march of 55 li. down the left bank of the Chialing Chiang, which here winds a good deal between more open mountain slopes. The [491] river is crossed by a ferry to reach Chaohua, a small third class district city, built on a point of land at the confluence of the Chialing Chiang and a large tributary called the Pai Ho from Kansu. These rivers have cut deep narrow valleys in the precipitous mountains, which seem to run in all directions.

Leaving Chaohua the road climbs to the top of a ridge between the two rivers and continues along the summit in a westerly direction for 40 li with finally a descent to the village of Tashumu, whence it ascends another ridge leading S.W. The trail is here a good paved path, ascending and descending where necessary by flights of stone steps, and the march along the summits of the ridges affords a series of fine views over the surrounding mountains. Seventy li from Chaohua the path drops steeply into the gorge of a stream flowing north, up which it continues for another hour, passing through a gate in a remarkable defile under steep precipices of conglomerate rock, to reach the large [361] village of Chienmen Kuan, the seat of a deputy magistrate under Chien Chou.

On the next day's march the path follows up the valley for a short distance, and then climbs again on to a ridge which leads in a south-westerly direction. The paved path is much of the way bordered by venerable trees hundreds of years old, whose welcome shade accompanies one at intervals right through these mountains for several days'

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PLATE XXIV

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TREE-LINED HIGHWAY THROUGH CENTRAL KANSU

TREE-LINED HIGHWAY THROUGH CENTRAL KANSU

[FACING p. 105]

CHAPTER VIII

FROM HSIAN FU IN SHENSI TO LANCHOU FU IN KANSU BY THE GREAT WEST ROAD

The Great West Road—Hsienyang—Lich'uan—Ch'ienchou—Yungshou—Pinchou—Ch'angwu—Kansu border—Chingchou—P'ingliang—Kansu Mahomedans—Wat'ing—The late General T'ung Fu-hsiang—The Liupan Shan—Lungtu—Chingning—Rest-houses and inns—Brackish water—Trail of desolation left by Mahomedan campaigns—Huining—Disadvantages of being a magistrate on the high road—Beacon towers—Anting—Kantsao Tien—Lanchou—Kansu climate—Wool factory—The Governor of Kansu—The C.P.O.—Missionaries—Recent events in Kansu.

FROM Hsian Fu in Shensi to Lanchou Fu in Kansu by the Great West Road is a distance of about 1400 li (say 425 miles), which is covered in eighteen to twenty days. If the road from Hsian to Chengtu and Lassa be considered the most important overland route in China, this one, from Hsian to Lanchou and Kashgar, has every claim to rank next. Unlike the former, which is only a mule trail, it is a cart track all the way. Passing from the coast into the heart of North-Western China through a natural gap in the mountains formed by the valley of the Wei River, it continues into Central Asia along the narrow strip of fertile country occupied by the Chinese between the mountains of Northern Tibet and the deserts of Mongolia. It is both one of the longest and most ancient highways in the world.

The first stage, a short one of 50 li across the plain to Hsienyang Hsien, crossing the Wei River by a cart ferry just before getting in, is the same as the first march on the Chengtu road. Outside Hsienyang the Szechuan and Kansu roads bifurcate, the latter leading north-west across the undulating loess plain for 70 li to Lich'uan Hsien, whence it continues for another short march of 40 li across similar country, ascending gradually, to Ch'ien Chou. During the month of May these plains are covered as far as the eye can reach with healthy-looking crops of wheat and lucerne; the latter, a most useful crop in Western Shensi and Eastern Kansu, is used for fodder; in the Han valley, however, a

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Most of the magistrates' yamens throughout Northern and North-Eastern Kansu were dreadfully dilapidated, but the one here was about the worst we saw, being scarcely habitable, and in keeping with the rest of this ruined little city. The magistrate complained that the inhabitants of his district were poor to the verge of starvation.

I was told that the road across the Liupan Shan was made by General Tso to facilitate communications during the campaigns against the Mahomedans, the former route, which is still used to a limited extent, passing from Wat'ing to Kuyuan, and thence *via* Haich'eng and Chingyuan to Lanchou.

From Lungtê to Chingning Chou is a march of 90 li down the valley, which is cultivated but very arid-looking, and dotted with wretched farms and hamlets. There are no trees except those which line the road. The arid climate of North China is often ascribed to the destruction of the forests by the Chinese in ancient days, but it is doubtful whether the loess was ever covered by trees owing to its peculiar consistency; it is certainly quite unsuited for the growth of trees nowadays. Further on the valley becomes quite barren, the ground being covered with a white alkaline efflorescence, and 15 li from Chingning it narrows to a gorge with the path ledged in the hillside, eventually debouching on to a more fertile valley where irrigation is practised. Chingning, a considerable market town, lies in this valley.

On the following march the road turns up a side ravine, climbs a long steep hill to a pass in the loess, and descends through a maze of loess hills to a valley which leads down to the village of Kaochia P'u (45 li); it continues to follow this valley for another hour's march and then turns north-west up a long narrow defile in the loess, a weary trek with repeated little steep descents and ascents in and out of side nullahs, for the rest of the way to Ch'ingchia Yi, 90 li from Chingning, a walled village and former posting stage and fort. These posting stages, with which we became so familiar on the main roads of Kansu, are mostly provided with official rest-houses called *hsingt'ai*, in which we were usually quartered; though very dilapidated they provided quite good accommodation in the summer, being usually uninhabited and therefore free from smells. The

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granite walls. The path runs for a short distance along the river, and then enters a belt of sand hills from which it emerges on to the river again at the village of T'ungkuan P'o, lying at the entrance to the gorges. From here to Lanchou (20 li) the road is a broad highway up the open cultivated valley of the Yellow River.

Lanchou Fu, now officially known by the name of the district, Kaolan Hsien, is by far the most attractive of the provincial capitals of China I have visited. It is built along the right bank of the Yellow River at a point where the hills close in on the river, the valley expanding into small plains to the east and west. The greyish yellow city walls and towers blending with the yellow waters of the river and the desolate yellow grey hills all around, the whole relieved by the bright green of the irrigated fields in the valley, combine to form an attractive picture which will long remain with those on whom the deserts and mountains of the North West exercise their mysterious charm. The modern iron bridge across the Yellow River, constructed a few years ago by foreign engineers, is rather an eyesore, but its great utility more than makes up for its appearance. Across this bridge, which at the time of our visit was in a very decayed state as far as the woodwork was concerned, passes an almost incessant stream of traffic, carts, ponies, mules, camels, and sometimes yak, bound eastwards for China and westwards for Turkestan. So far as I know there are only three bridges across the Yellow River, this one, and the Peking-Hankow and Tientsin-Pukou railway bridges in Honan and Shantung; which is, however, a better record than the Yangtzu can show, the latter having no bridges across its course anywhere. The walls of Lanchou are well built and kept in good repair, and the whole city has an air of compact strength, comparative cleanliness, and prosperity. It was never taken by the Mahomedans during the rebellions of the past, and it was also one of the few provincial capitals to escape being looted by soldiers or mob during the revolution of 1911 and subsequent troubles, and its shops appear rich and well stocked. Owing to its situation at the junction of the Yellow River with the highway from China to Turkestan, as well as numerous other roads leading in various directions, it is by far the most important centre in

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Hsien, surrounded by rich irrigated lands, is a city of some importance, occupying a strategic position between Lanchou Fu and the Mahomedan strongholds round Ho Chou. It is also a centre of the water pipe tobacco industry and of the trade in lumber, the latter rafted down the T'ao River from the forests of the Kokonor.

From Titao to Weiyuan Hsien is a distance of 110 li across the watershed between the T'ao and Wei rivers, which can be divided into two marches by halting at the hamlets of Yaotien or Ch'ingp'ing, where there are inns, 50 and 80 li out respectively. Leaving Titao the road runs up a shallow cultivated valley bounded by hills of red clay in an easterly and then a southerly direction for 80 li to the hamlet of Ch'ingp'ing, where the valley is a mere ravine. From here it ascends a grassy ridge which is followed for two hours' march to gain the watershed pass, and then drops steeply to Weiyuan Hsien. The railway from Hsian to Lanchou which, it is proposed, shall follow up the Wei valley, will here presumably require a tunnel through this watershed to reach the valley of the T'ao. Weiyuan is of some interest to the Chinese as lying on the headwaters of their historical river the Wei. We found it a small but well-kept city, rejoicing in a particularly progressive young magistrate. The river is here quite small and easily fordable, and its valley though narrow is cultivated and has a prosperous appearance.

From Weiyuan to Kungch'ang is a march of 90 li by a good road down the valley, generally a mile or two wide, well cultivated, and bounded by bare hills. Numerous villages are passed, the largest being Shouyang Ch'eng, half way. Kungch'ang Fu, now known as Lunghsi Hsien, is a large city in extent, but having been destroyed during the Mahomedan rebellion is still half in ruins. Another march of 90 li, still down the valley, brings one to Ningyuan. Forty li out the hills close in on the valley which becomes barren and stony. The Wei River is forded twice on this stage and also the Nan Ho, a large tributary from the south. The latter was in flood and gave us some trouble. Immediately after crossing the Nan Ho there is a steep ascent and descent over a ridge which blocks the valley at this point, followed by an hour's march down the open valley to Ningyuan.

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It is suggested that the Chinese might with advantage borrow the services of some officers from the Survey of India and proceed to the triangulation of the whole country. The results, at any rate in Kansu and parts of Shensi, would be surprising. Amongst many other interesting facts which would be brought to light are the actual heights of the snow-clad mountains on the western borders of Kansu and Szechuan, some of which probably equal or surpass all but the highest giants of the Himalayas.

Min Chou (now Min Hsien) is a small city with busy suburbs situated on the right bank of the T'ao River at the point where the latter, flowing down from the Kokonor mountains in the west, makes a sharp right-angle turn to the north. The altitude is about 7500 feet. The T'ao River valley, here nearly a mile wide in places, is very fertile, and produces wheat, barley, beans, hemp, etc. Like T'ao Chou and Hsiku, Min Chou is a centre for the Chinese trade with the Tibetan inhabitants of the Kokonor country further west. A rough cart built entirely of wood with remarkably high wheels and drawn by the half-bred yak is used round Min Chou, on the roads to T'ao Chou, on the grasslands round the latter, and in other border parts of the province. I mention this cart because it is obviously very useful and because it is quite unusual to find wheeled traffic of any kind in such mountainous country in China; its introduction into the Tibetan inhabited plateau west of Tachienlu in Szechuan would revolutionise transport in that region.

Leaving Min Chou the road runs along the right bank of the T'ao River for ten li, and then crosses to the left bank by a ferry, the bridge having been destroyed at the time of the White Wolf raid. The river is here in the summer about 80 yards wide, six to eight feet deep, and very rapid. Navigation is confined to rafts of lumber down stream. From the ferry the path continues up the valley for three to four hours' march to the village of Hsitachai. The T'ao River valley is in this neighbourhood one of the most attractive regions in Kansu, or perhaps in China, being fertile and well cultivated, and bounded on the southern side by forest-clad mountains, the foothills of the great Min Shan. The river flows much of the way in a narrow

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valley, at first through cultivated fields and then through a densely wooded gorge. This is a difficult march in the summer, as the trail constantly crosses and recrosses the stream, which is rapid, obstructed by boulders, and only just fordable. Several of us got a wetting, but we were lucky in keeping the pack-mules on their feet and our bedding dry. The mountains in the neighbourhood are covered with fine forest, but mostly on the slopes facing north only, a peculiarity which may be noticed all along the Kokonor border; I have observed the same thing in the forests of Northern Shansi; whether it is that the sun is too hot on the southern slopes, or that the northern slopes alone receive sufficient moisture, I am unable to say. Four to five hours' march down this gorge, past several small lamaseries, brings one to the junction of this stream with the Tahsia River, a torrent flowing from Labrang to Ho Chou. The Labrang road turns up this valley and runs for a few li through cultivated fields to the small monastery of Shakou Ssu, which lies on the north side of the stream, with a Mahomedan hamlet, Sasuma, opposite, where we passed the night in an inn. There are pine forests all around, and the Tahsia River, though only a mountain torrent, is used for rafting the cut timber down to the Yellow River and Lanchou. The timber is made up into narrow sections, fastened one behind the other, and the jointed raft which results is navigated down the rapids and through the rocks with extraordinary skill by Mahomedan raftmen.

From Heitso to Labrang is a distance of some 120 li, and Sasuma lies about half way, the track running for the rest of the way up the valley of the Tahsia River. For the first 30 li the path is very bad and rocky, the valley being a gorge hemmed in by wooded mountains; there is no more fording to be done, however, as the river is spanned by good cantilever bridges, this being a portion of the Labrang-Ho Chou road, which is much used by the mule trains of Mahomedan merchants. In this neighbourhood we saw some *ma chi*, the large and handsome silver pheasant with red legs (*Crossoptilon auritum*, probably). For the second 30 li the valley opens out and the road becomes a good highway. The first intimation we received of the approach to Labrang were the white and blue tents dotted

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PLATE XXXIV

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MONASTERY OF SHAKOU SSU

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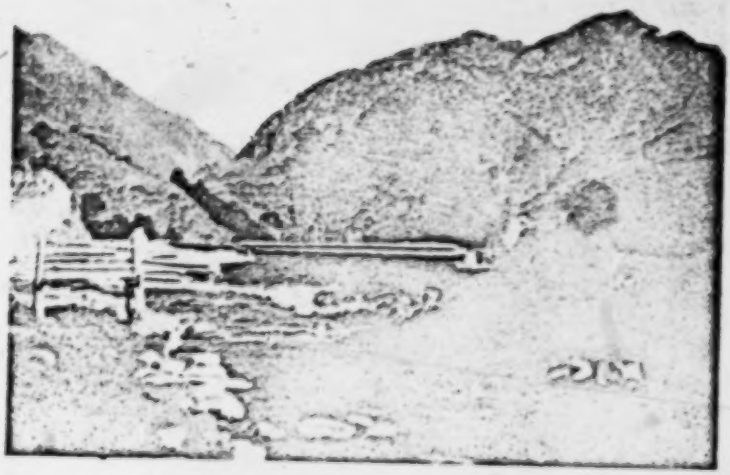

CANTILEVER BRIDGE ON THE ROAD TO LABRANG

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PLATE XXXVI

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CANTILEVER BRIDGE BETWEEN LABRANG AND HOCHOU

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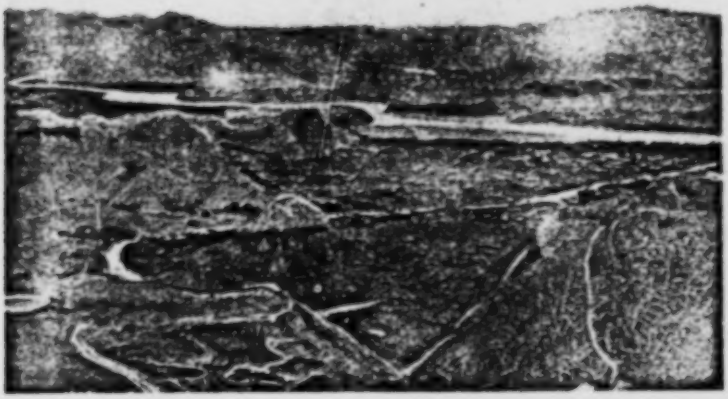

T'AO RIVER VALLEY BETWEEN HOCHOU AND LANCHOU FU

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meaningless jargon of transliterated Chinese characters, does more harm than good to the cause of Christianity. A translation of the Old Testament, distributed, in accordance with the declared policy of the Bible Societies, without notes or comment, cannot but compare unfavourably with the austerely pure classics of Confucius. In striking contrast to the work of the Bible Societies is that carried on by the Christian Literature Society in its dissemination of wholesome modern literature.

From Ho Chou to Lanchou Fu is a three days' journey called 210 li. The road runs in a north-westerly direction across the fertile valley to reach the Tahsia River, which is crossed by a well-built wooden bridge. From here it ascends steeply over hills of loess and red clay for a few hundred feet, and then runs along a ridge between two deep narrow valleys for 35 li to the village of Sonanpa. The divide between the T'ao and Tahsia rivers is crossed just before reaching Sonanpa, a village with inns perched up on the top of the ridge, where we passed the night.

On the following day's march the road continues along an undulating ridge, gradually descending, for four hours' march to the village of Tawant'ou, lying on the edge of the loess mountains overlooking the T'ao River valley, into which the road drops by a long and very steep descent to reach the township of T'angwanch'uan. This place is about half-way between Ho Chou and Lanchou Fu and is the largest centre passed on the way. The T'ao valley in the neighbourhood is irrigated and fertile, but the surrounding hills are bare of all vegetation, and the country is absolute desert where irrigation ceases. The geological formation of the hills, loess superimposed on red sandstone weathered into pinnacles and pillars of all kinds of shapes and designs, presents a most curious sight. In the valley the noonday heat of the midsummer sun reflected off the desert rocks was terrific. The T'ao River, here about 80 yards wide, deep and rapid, is crossed by a ferry, and the road continues north-east through desolate sandy hills to Manp'ing, a miserable village, the end of the stage and 80 li from Lanchou. This place is in the district of Shani, which is mostly desert.

From Manp'ing the road ascends through a desolate

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the P'ingfan River a few li south of Hung Ch'engtzu, a small walled town and the end of the second stage from Lanchou.

From Hung Ch'engtzu to the district city of P'ingfan is a pleasant march of 70 li up the fertile valley, past several villages, including the township of Nan Tatung about half-way. A mile before getting in the old Manchu garrison town of Chuang-lang T'ing is passed, imposing in appearance with its well-built walls, but nowadays an empty shell. The remnants of these old Manchu garrisons in Western Kansu are now, as elsewhere, in extreme poverty. But their existence at any rate gives the province the distinction of being, so far as I know, the only one of the eighteen provinces which contains a resident population of the five races, symbolised by the new five coloured national flag, which go to make up the Republic, Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, and Mahomedans. The Union of Races represented by this flag has hardly become a reality yet; and is perhaps not likely to materialise until the Chinese cease fighting the Tibetans and grant them autonomy as a self-governing dominion of the Chinese commonwealth on the lines of the relationship between Canada or Australia and the rest of the British Empire. P'ingfan is a prosperous little place, the centre of a rich irrigated valley, and is of some importance as the junction of roads to Lanchou, Hsining, Liangchou, and Ninghsia, the four largest towns of Western Kansu.

From P'ingfan the road continues up the valley with the ruins of the Great Wall on the right hand, the scenery becoming wilder and cultivation and habitations less as one proceeds. Thirty li out the mountains close in on the valley to form a gorge, and shortly afterwards the river is forded to reach the village and former posting stage of Wusheng Yi, 40 li from P'ingfan. Beyond this place the valley becomes flat and open and assumes a plateau-like character, with patches of cultivation here and there. Another 40 li brings one to the village and ruined fort of Ch'ak'ou Yi, the end of a stage of 80 li. General desolation and ruins are the features of this part of Kansu, intensified to us perhaps by the fact that we rode during the afternoon through a succession of bitterly cold hailstorms, the elevation being close on 9000 feet. The remains of the Great Wall, the ruins of farms, villages, and forts, the abandoned fields in the marshy valley,

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and the background of bare snow-sprinkled mountains, made up a wild and desolate landscape, the scene of uncounted contests between Chinese, Tartars, and Mahomedans in the past.

The trail continues up the valley, which is here a mile or two wide and slopes gently up to grassy downs on either side, for four to five hours' march to an old military post called Chench'iang Yi. Here the river is crossed by a ford, which must be difficult in rainy weather, and the road, leaving the P'ingfan valley, runs due north over easy grassy slopes for 15 li to gain the Wushao Ling (10,000 feet), the divide between the waters which flow east to join the Yellow River and those which flow north into the desert and fail to reach the sea. Immediately to the west some rocky peaks patched with snow rise to a height of 14,000 to 15,000 feet. From the pass the road descends, at first over grassy downs alive with marmots, and then by a steep stony track, to the ruined village of Anyuan P'u in the narrow valley of the Kulang River. The Wushao Ling will prove the principal engineering obstacle to the railway which is projected as an extension of the Lung Hai line along the main road towards Central Asia, and will presumably necessitate a considerable tunnel. Otherwise the construction of this extension will be easy compared to the section from Hsian to Lanchou. Fifteen li down the valley brings one to the village of Lungk'ou P'u. This is a long day's march called 90 li (which means 30 miles in Western Kansu) and the track beyond the pass is bad and rocky.

On the following day a short march of 45 li by a rough road down the valley brought us to the district city of Kulang, a small town three-parts in ruins situated at the point where the stream debouches from the mountains on to the plain. Here we were given a typical instance of Chinese administrative methods. One of our mules having fallen lame, we asked the magistrate to be good enough to procure us another animal, which he said could easily be done. We were accommodated in a small yamen and our mules in an inn, and that evening the head muleteer came round in a great state and said that one of our mules had been seized by the underlings from the magistrate's yamen. Explanations were of course immediately forthcoming and the misunderstanding cleared up. The magistrate had instructed his

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to cultivation, has of course had a great effect on the good results obtained. It now remains to be seen whether suppression can be maintained after the withdrawal of this foreign stimulus. In the eastern provinces where the upper and middle classes are more or less in contact with the West a strong native public opinion now exists against opium; the same cannot be said of the backward North West; and it is there that the authorities will have to watch for recrudescence of cultivation. As regards the suppression of smoking and consumption generally, the same success has by no means been attained, and in out of the way parts it appears to be indulged in much as formerly. In view of the increasing scarcity of the drug, however, and the rising price, this cannot really be the case, and if suppression of cultivation is strictly adhered to, the existing stocks will gradually be exhausted, and the rising generation will grow up without contracting the opium habit.

We rested at Liangchou for a day, being entertained by the officials, and then left for Chenfan, distant three marches. The first stage was 65 li to a group of farms called Chungchia Ta Men lying on the edge of the desert. For the first three hours the road, a good cart-track, lies through rich irrigated country, and for the rest of the way belts of sandy desert alternate with irrigated fields. The water, where it is not obtainable from irrigation channels, is very brackish. From Chungchia Ta Men the road continues north across a sandy plain between the desert on the right hand and cultivated lands on the left. Farms with wells are passed 20 and 40 li out. Hsiangchia Wan, the end of another stage of 65 li, is a thickly populated oasis on the edge of the desert, lying just east of a range of barren hills which form a prominent landmark from afar. The snow mountains behind Liangchou now fade out of sight. From here to Chenfan Hsien is a distance of 70 li. The trail still runs north over a sandy plain covered with scrub and rough grass with a river on the left hand, the latter formed by the junction of various streams and irrigation channels, and flowing north to water the Chenfan oasis and beyond to lose itself in the sands of the desert. Branches of this stream have to be forded at various points; though quite shallow, they contain dangerous quicksands and should be approached with care. Thirty-five

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plain to Yungch'ang Hsien, a small district city on the mainroad. 487 133

Leaving Yungch'ang the trail runs west up a cultivated valley for 25 li to the ruined village of Shuimo Kuan. Here the stream is forded, and the trail, leaving the high road [491] to Kanchou and Suchou on the right hand, continues up the valley due west, ascending very gradually, for 50 li to Kaoku Ch'eng, an old walled military post surrounded by a ruined village, where we passed the night in the dilapidated yamen of the *Yu Chi*, or Major in the old army of the Green Standard, who still survived in this remote corner of the Republic, though about eight years out of date. Kaoku Ch'eng lies in a broad shallow valley sloping up to the mountains on either side, with very little cultivation. Ruined farms and abandoned fields are numerous, and signs of former prosperity and present depopulation are not wanting. A huge snow mountain is visible lying ten to twenty miles away to the south, apparently part of the snow range behind Liangchou.

Beyond Kaoku Ch'eng the flat valley merges imperceptibly into a rolling grassy plain, bounded north and south by mountains, and uninhabited save for flocks of sheep and occasional antelope. The road undulates due west across this plain, running more or less parallel to the main range of the Nan Shan, a high rocky barrier bounding the Kokonor plateau. For the last ten li there is a descent through cultivated fields to Tama Ying, another old walled military post mostly in ruins, lying on the head-waters of a stream flowing N.W. towards Shantan Hsien. There are several farms of settlers in the neighbourhood, and the barley looked well, though still green in early August (elevation between 8000 and 9000 feet). On this day's march we noticed the ruins of some of the old beacon towers common to the high roads of Kansu, and these ruins, with those of the old military posts, show that this was once an important military road. At Tama Ying we were again quartered in the yamen of the *Yu Chi*, the latter an aged veteran of the Mahomedan campaigns, who was spending the evening of his no doubt active and adventurous life in this remote spot, with only the vaguest ideas of the momentous changes which had come to pass with the disappearance of the Manchu dynasty.

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nominally responsible to the Chinese officials at Hsining. Mongol tribes are found living in the bend of the Yellow River, near the Golok country, and even as far south as the country between Jyekundo and Nagchuka towards Lassa, but appear to have become completely Tibetanised, and to retain only the tradition of their origin.

Yungan is a replica of Êpo, only poorer, an old walled post with the interior almost entirely in ruins. It lies not far from the Tatung River, surrounded by grassy downs and overlooked by rocky snow-capped ranges. One is here on the reverse side of the outer barrier range of the Nan Shan, the snows of which provide the water for the streams which fertilize the Liangchou oases. This portion of the Kokonor border is the meeting-point of the four widely-spread races of High Asia, Chinese, Mahomedans, Tibetans, and Mongols.

From Yungan to Pei Tatung is another long march of over 100 li. The trail runs east and then south-east across undulating grass prairies dotted with herds of yak for 45 li to a solitary inn or ranch known as Paishui Ho, whence it continues across a plain, gradually approaching the Tatung River, to reach Pei Tatung. The going is excellent across grass all the way. Pei Tatung, lying on the left bank of the Tatung River, is another walled village mostly in ruins. Barley is grown in the neighbourhood, the first cultivation met with since entering the Pien Tu K'ou from Maying Tung. The valley of the Tatung River in this neighbourhood consists of a rich grass prairie bounded on either side by rocky snow-capped ranges; to the south the mountains approach close to the river; to the north they rise on the other side of the plain. Between Kueitê on the Yellow River and Kanchou in Western Kansu the Nan Shan consist of three huge parallel ranges, dividing off the valleys of the Tatung, Hsining, and Yellow rivers. We were now between the two highest and most northern of these ranges.

The following day's march occupied us from dawn till eight o'clock at night, the distance being called 100 li but entailing the passage of the Tatung River and of a high pass known as the Tapan Shan. The river, some eighty yards wide (in August). deep, and very rapid, has to be crossed immediately on leaving Pei Tatung. Men and loads

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are ferried across on a small raft of inflated skins (called *p'ifatzu*), but the animals have to swim. Owing to the rapidity of the current and the frail nature of the skin-raft (a light wooden platform resting on nine blown-out yak hides) the passage is rather exciting. Inducing the animals to swim across was a long and tedious business, and not without danger for them, but all our mules and ponies were eventually got across with no worse damage than one pony lamed. The water was icy, and the wretched animals were shivering with cold when they emerged, notwithstanding the season of the year, which was mid-August. Leaving the river the path enters a narrow gorge in the mountains and almost immediately commences to rise steeply. From the river to the top of the pass (between 13,000 and 14,000 feet) is a hard climb of four hours or so by a bad rocky trail. The summit is a narrow ridge of bare rock composed of bright green and red slabs of shale. We missed the view as we reached the pass in a bitterly cold snowstorm, through which I caught a glimpse near the top of some animals which looked like wild sheep. This range is known locally as the Tapan Shan, and is a most formidable barrier. It is noted amongst the Chinese for its noxious vapours, which are supposed to rise from the ground on the higher slopes, and most of our party crossed it with scarves wound round their faces; it is a waste of time trying to explain even to educated Chinese that the air is not noxious, but only rarified; they have not the least objection to your believing in the rarified air theory, but intimate that they know better. My experience of high passes on the borders of Kansu and Szechuan is that the effects of rarified air are much worse on the razor-backed passes, like the Tapan Shan, than on even higher divides which are approached by easy slopes.

The ascent of the Tapan Shan is steep enough, but the descent on the other side is much worse, and the trail very rough and rocky. Eventually a gorge is reached, which is followed for three hours' march to a solitary Mahomedan inn called Tuchia T'ai. By the time we reached this spot, although the snow had turned into rain as we descended, and then ceased altogether, everyone was pretty well tired out; but the accommodation was limited, and the

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valley narrows to a rocky gorge, and the cart track branches off towards P'ingfan. The mule trail through this defile, which is some 40 li in length, is a nightmare of a path, especially in wet weather, being very rough and narrow, ledged in the cliff side above the roaring waters of the Hsining River; two-thirds of the way through there is an opening and an inn, Yangchia Tientzu, where we had a welcome rest. From the eastern end of this gorge to Hsiangt'ang, the end of the stage, is a distance of ten li. The peculiarity of the valley in this neighbourhood is that the cultivated fields are entirely covered with large stones which are placed there on purpose, in order, we were told, to preserve the moisture in the ground. These stone-covered fields produce most excellent melons of various kinds, and the sight of the huge juicy fruit apparently growing out of bare stones is a remarkable one.

Just below Hsiangt'ang the Tatung River is crossed by a good wooden bridge at the point where it debouches from a defile in the mountains on to the valley of the Hsining River; it is here less than twenty yards wide, but very deep and rapid, and flows between almost perpendicular cliffs of rock; though it contains much the greater volume of water, it joins the Hsining River in the form of a tributary, issuing from a cleft in the mountains on to the open valley of the latter. From here the trail continues down the arid valley, being rough and stony most of the way, especially where it climbs in and out of side nullahs or ascends the face of the cliff. Fifty li out a ruined wall and fort are passed, barring the valley at a narrow point, and just before reaching the village of Hotsuitzu, the end of a stage of 75 li, the river washes the left-hand side of the valley, and the weary traveller is forced to follow a narrow footpath high up the face of the sandstone cliff; here a block of sandstone, becoming detached from higher up on the cliff and hurling itself into the torrent below, only missed by a few feet bringing the career of the principal member of the expedition to an abrupt termination. The valley round the village of Hotsuitzu is desolate in the extreme, bare red sandstone with a layer of yellow loess superimposed like icing on a cake. It is difficult to persuade oneself that this loess was not laid down by water. One of the arguments in favour

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of the aerial origin of the loess is the absence in it of fossil shells of water animals; but so far as I know such fossils are equally absent in re-deposited loess obviously laid down by water. If the great rivers of South America have deposited the soils of the Argentine pampas, there seems little reason to doubt that the Yellow River has done the same for North China. The desert mountains round the lower end of the Hsining River valley are rich in copper, and before the Revolution a mine was being worked in the neighbourhood with the assistance of a foreign engineer and foreign machinery; it appears to have suffered the fate common to all Chinese official enterprises of this nature, but its failure was not, so far as I am aware, due to any deficiency in the quality or quantity of the ore.

From Hotsuitzu the road continues down the valley which debouches on to the Yellow River 55 li further on. The latter can be crossed by a ferry here, but the path usually followed ascends through a desolate defile past a number of salt pans to a loess plateau, whence it descends to a ferry. The Yellow River is here some 200 yards wide and is crossed by means of a large ferry-boat taking animals. A further hour's march down the Yellow River valley through irrigated fields brings one to the township of Hsin Ch'eng, the end of a stage of 75 li.

From Hsin Ch'eng to Lanchou Fu is a march of 70 li by a good road down the valley through fertile irrigated fields backed by desert hills. This stage can be accomplished rapidly and easily by taking passage on one of the small skin rafts, numbers of which descend the river in the month of August laden with water melons for the Lanchou market. These rafts, composed of a light framework resting on a few inflated skins, are usually small enough and light enough to be carried back up stream on the shoulders of their owners. We were fortunate in striking the valleys above Lanchou during the height of the melon season. The dry heat in these arid valleys at that time of the year was at times truly terrific, and the melons, of which we consumed large quantities on the road, were delicious. The best melons in China are grown in this neighbourhood. We found four varieties; the *tsui kua* and the *hsiang kua*, small and very fragrant sweet melons; the *hsi kua*, the ordinary

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tion comes to an end, and the fertile plain gives way to a sandy waste. Eventually, after some twenty-seven to thirty hours of actual drifting down stream from Chungwei, exclusive of halts, we reached the walled fort of Hung Ch'eng, which is, so to speak, the port of Ninghsia, lying on the right bank at the point where the Great Wall and the main trail from T'aiyuan *via* Suitê to Ninghsia strike the Yellow River. Behind it the land rises in sandy uninhabited downs, the beginning of the Ordos desert. The river is here about three-quarters of a mile wide and is crossed by a ferry. Ninghsia lies 40 li inland on the opposite side.

As our ponies had not yet turned up on their overland journey from Chungwei we found ourselves stranded on the river bank opposite Hung Ch'eng, until the Ninghsia authorities, learning of our arrival, sent some animals down to meet us. The trail to Ninghsia leads across a strip of waste land five li in extent stretching along the river, and then runs for the rest of the way through irrigated fields, mostly under rice, traversing several large irrigation channels. There is probably more rice (though of an inferior kind) grown on the Yellow River plains between Ninghsia and Chungwei than anywhere else in China north of the Ch'inling Shan; but also this was the only region in Kansu where we were troubled by mosquitoes, the elevation being under 4000 feet. We spent a few days in Ninghsia, being hospitably entertained by the Mahomedan General and other officials. It is a large town, and a political and commercial centre of some importance, but the interior is very dilapidated and poor-looking. It is the centre of trade with the Mongols of the Ordos and the Alashan (the latter really the name of a Mongol state rather than a mountain range), chiefly in wool and sheep and goat skins; a particularly fine lamb-skin, called *t'anyang p'i* is a noted local product, as well as felts and carpets. An old Ninghsia rug is of considerable value anywhere. The local Mahomedan General, Ma Fu-hsiang, who is also a sort of Military Governor of North-Eastern Kansu, is one of the leading Mahomedans of the Province, and represents a fine soldierly type of Chinese Moslem. He served under T'ung Fu-hsiang in Peking in 1900 and commanded the Dowager Empress' escort on the retreat to Hsian. The Manchus had no more loyal servants

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rouse, and together they will then join the Shensi sitter, when, their band being complete, they will accomplish their long-appointed mission of raising mankind.

At nightfall we passed the Kansu border. The first incident which made us aware of this fact was an official proclamation with the two Chinese ideographs, meaning Kansu, heading it. Simultaneously the character of the road changed, and we found ourselves moving in the darkness through an avenue of stately trees, our hearts beating high, for we had now reached the Province indicated on our 'Sealed Orders,' although we knew not as yet the locality to which we were going.

That night, our first in Kansu, our bed was in a stable. Merely a cave hollowed out of the loess-cliff, it held a little mud *kang*,[1] on which the travelling carter was wont to sleep while the mules fed at his side. The walls were black with the dirt of generations, the floor was littered with damp stable-manure, and our hand-luggage was laid in the manger. The door was a low, irregular aperture; no opening had been left for a window; the flicker of the linseed-oil lamp filled the cave with heavy shadows, and though the night was very cold the *kang* had not been warmed.

We had often tried to picture the real conditions of the inn at Bethlehem, and it seemed to us that night that we had come much nearer to their realisation.

By the side of our cave, raised three feet from the ground, was a small hollowed recess, about the size of a large baker's oven. The opening was screened by a filthy, hanging rag, and within lay three men, tasting the sensuous enjoyment of the opium pipe. The space was so small that the feet of the smokers were thrust outside, and though the night was bitter and their

[1] A brick or mud bed heated with a fire.

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that two hundred thousand people had perished in the disaster.

Before reaching Lanchow we crossed a wide river by means of a well-built and handsome bridge, which had also been constructed with famine relief funds, and which now provided the means for saving scores of lives, a heavy yearly toll having hitherto been exacted by the treacherous mountain torrent.

On leaving the town of Tsingningchow we travelled for seven days before touching another Mission station —a tremendous gap in the chain, so it seemed to us in those days, unused as we were then to the wider horizons of the Great North-West. Half-way stood the little market-town of Anting, to which Mission authorities had directed our attention as the possible goal of our quest; but as we walked through its streets with every perception alert, we felt the firm conviction that our appointed destination lay still farther ahead.

One of our litter-men was a Moslem—proud and cantankerous, as all of his kind. A somewhat grimy, white, woollen cap was the badge of his belief, and at brief intervals he would raise his head and sing a wild snatch of the 'Song of the Wandering Dove,' a weird melody greatly loved by the men of his race, and sung by them in eulogy of home when on a journey, the barbaric intervals of which produced a most dramatic effect in those lonely gullies. An altercation frequently arose between this man and the others, on the subject of the choice between Moslem or Gentile inns, the former being distinguished by the painted sign of a teapot, and the mystic words: 'KIAO MEN' (member of the assembly). The boasted 'cleanliness' of the Moslem inn is, however, not visible to the naked eye, but manifests itself otherwise, namely, in endless bickerings with the travellers on matters of purification connected

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with material or cooking utensils. The suspicious atmosphere created was always most irksome to us, feeling as we did that our cleanliness much exceeded the demands made by these self-righteous Pharisees.

The *kang* on which we slept was of a different construction from those we had met with elsewhere, this being due to the fact that the only fuel obtainable on this journey is animal droppings. These *kangs* were covered with movable boards, under which a hollow space is left for piling up the dry horse-dung, which, once set alight, will smoulder for hours. The fumes are laden with a nauseating smell, which so permeates the traveller's bedding and clothing as to be noticeable for weeks. These same fumes produce an extraordinary effect on the woodwork of the room, which rapidly gains a surface equal in colour and polish to the best old oak. The clothes of the people had now changed from indigo-dyed cotton to undyed sheep's wool. In every hamlet the older men sat in the sun spinning yarn, or knitting socks for themselves on two needles; this is accomplished by means of a diagonal down the centre of the foot and a seam at the back. The better-dressed boys wore garments of white felt. No seam was necessary in the whole coat, as it was shaped in the making to the size and form of the wearer. The felt is home-made, and many times we saw men treading out the macerated wool which is moulded to the shape required and dried in the sun. Shoes, coats and hats are made in this way, and whole villages are given up to the industry.

Lanchow, the capital of Kansu, is reached through a maze of narrow gullies. It is beautifully situated on the swift-flowing Yellow River, and is backed by the Blue Lotus Hills. Its streets are wide and crowded, and its population cosmopolitan. A splendid iron

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bridge has replaced the old bridge-of-boats, which until quite recently spanned the great flood. Green sedan-chairs, we found, were still used by the officials, and the Yamens still retained the grand style which had existed under the Manchu Government—a pomp which entirely vanished from Shansi with the entry of the Republic, and has also since passed from Kansu, with the arrival of Marshal Feng's armies. We spent three weeks in Lanchow, staying most of the time in the central China Inland Mission compound, but paying visits to the Borden Hospital on the further bank of the river, and to the large boys' school at the foot of the Blue Lotus Hills, both of which are under the auspices of the China Inland Mission, which is the only society working in Lanchow. The whole visit was brimful of interest, and we were particularly struck with the way in which the Christian community had impressed itself on the civic life of the town.

The great Yellow River, during summer months, supplies a waterway by which the journey to Peking may be accomplished in about thirty days by raft. These rafts are floated by means of inflated goat and bullock skins, which are roped together and carried very swiftly down-stream. Though the journey is popular, being quicker and easier than if taken by road, yet the element of danger is always present, and Dr. George King, at whose hospital we stayed when in Lanchow, was drowned in May 1927 when travelling by this route. His raft caught on a sandbank, and in helping the men to release it, he fell into the water and was swept away.

During the winter months the river is frozen over and can be crossed on foot. When the stream is freezing, and while it is thawing, the toll of accidents is always heavy. During the whole of our stay the surface of the

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Whether in winter or in summer, whether by litter or by cart, the Kansu roads present dangers to the traveller. In hot weather thunderstorms or cloud-bursts in the hills are not unusual, and on these occasions mountain torrents will rush down with such force as to carry everything before them, nor have a cart and mules any power to withstand the strength of the spate. Each of the large rivers is so subject to fluctuations of stream, and unexpected currents, that each year some of the more reckless villagers lose their lives by drowning. In winter the rivers are ice-bound, and supply the traveller with many a nerve-racking experience, as we found when it was necessary to cross the ice in darkness, avoiding, by the help of a tiny lantern, the deep holes and fissures.

The last day before entering Liangchow, and the two days after leaving it, are days of torture, owing to the stony nature of the road. Even the very streets of the town are as stony as the famous Portland pebble beach. Liangchow was the last outpost held by foreign missionaries in North-West China, and has been occupied by the China Inland Mission for the past forty years. Six days further on lies the city of Kanchow, and here lived a Chinese missionary and doctor who, five years previously, had taken up his residence there. From him and from his Church-officers we had received a most cordial invitation to pay them a visit, and having accepted to do so, we were soon on the march once more.

We delayed, however, a few days in the little town of Yungchang, distant two stages from Liangchow, the inhabitants of which have sunk to the lowest imaginable depth through opium smoking. Communal life here is not regulated, as in other places, by the meal hours, but by the recurring period at which the craving for the drug grips the population with invisible but relentless tentacles, so that on every *kang* the little lamp is

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the sixty miles are far too long a journey for you to walk.'

CHAPTER X

A TIBETAN LAMASERY

THE Kanchow oasis reaches to the very foot of the Tibetan hills, and of all the North-Western towns which we visited, this city is the one most frequented by Tibetan travellers. We constantly met them strolling about the streets, or bartering their gold, silver, peacock-feathers and skins for the necessary grain which their nomadic life, as well as the climatic conditions, make it impossible for them to produce. The Christian community was deeply interested in these people, the more so since a recent visit to a Lamasery, where some of them had been hospitably entertained. It was therefore decided that a band of us should spend some time at the Kang Lung Lamasery, on the occasion of their yearly temple dances.

The first stage of the three days' journey was done by cart, and brought us to a large farmstead owned by a Christian man, who was making arrangements to supply us with sufficient mules, horses, and donkeys to carry us and our goods over the mountain pass. We were a party of twelve, and carried the tent in which we were to sleep, a folding-organ, a load of books, and a good supply of rice and flour. Five miles outside Kanchow is a wide and treacherous river, difficult to cross in the summer when snows are rapidly melting, and when thunderstorms in the mountains are frequent. Experienced men watch the river, and word was brought to us on the morning of our departure, that the waters

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were too high to permit of a safe crossing before midday. The sun was therefore high in the heavens before we started, and we reached the bank still uncertain as to whether we might not be obliged to return home and come back again the next day.

The water was very high, and divided itself into ten separate channels, some wide and fairly shallow, others narrow and deep, so that the furthest bank was half a mile distant. It was a critical moment when the mules and carts plunged into the muddy, roaring, tumultuous stream, in which large stones were swirled round and round like pebbles, by the force of the current. Only by long experience does a man learn how to keep his head. He must know, as the Chinese express it, 'how to look at water,' and how to restrain his eye from being drawn off by the rushing eddies from that distant bank which seems so far away. Happily, animals have this gift by nature, and keep cool and quiet, even when the driver may have temporarily lost his bearings. Bullocks are the most reliable under these circumstances, for they at once take to swimming when their footing fails.

We were more than an hour fording, and as we approached the furthest bank, the shaft-mule of our cart stumbled badly, so that for a moment we thought we were going to be swept away. A shout went up from the men on the bank as they prepared to plunge in to our rescue, whereupon the mules, realising the danger, recovered themselves with a tremendous effort, and promptly drew us into shallow water.

It was already dark when we reached the house where we were expected. The fierce dogs were chained, the other animals had been fed, and the sheep folded so that the farmer's brief leisure hour had come. We were met at the door by the whole family, who emerged

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574 to greet and welcome us. Rooms had been swept and got ready, and we were immediately served with bowls of hot, slightly salted milk, and fried doughnuts. Willing hands relieved our tired drivers of the work of feeding and stabling the mules, and within an hour we sat down to an abundant evening meal of the best food procurable. A sheep had been killed in view of our arrival, so there was meat and vegetables, with hot steamed bread. The kindness we received in this home is but typical of the grace of hospitality as understood by the Chinese, and such as has ever been extended to us on innumerable occasions by rich and poor alike.

Before dawn the farmyard was noisy with the braying of many small donkeys, hired and borrowed from neighbouring farms for our use. All our baggage was transferred to the pack-saddles, and shortly after sunrise we started to ride across the burning sands of the plain, towards the shady ravine, the entrance to which we could only just discern in the blue hills ahead.

491 The whole of the day was spent in following a narrow, uphill path through the gorge, where we crossed and recrossed a brawling mountain torrent. About mid-day we passed the watch-tower marking the frontier, and then knew ourselves to be actually on Tibetan soil.

000 By early evening we called a halt, and pitched the tent on a grassy plot near a hut, which was the only human habitation we came upon. In it lived one old man, who cultivated a tiny garden, and whose house supplied the only possible shelter to the traveller over-taken by a blizzard. A large saucepan was filled from the stream, and a meal of boiled rice, this time without any accompaniment of pickles, was cooked over the camp fire, and round it we hungrily gathered, each

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first time, foreign onions, which were large and of a very good quality. Homespun cotton materials were also to be bought, as this district,[1] unlike many others, produces a very fair cotton crop, which the men spin, and weave by hand on primitive looms. Kaotai also supplies a very superior kind of anthracite, which when burnt in a brazier is practically smokeless, giving off intense heat for hours; its fumes, however, are unpleasant to those unaccustomed to them.

From Kaotai there are two roads to Suchow, used alternately according to the season of the year; we took on this occasion the upper one following the foot of the Richthofen Range, where, between the oases, tracts of coarse gritty sand are found overlaid with small black pebbles, which presented an excellent and firm surface for our carts.

The first stage in this direction brought us to the ruined city of Camel-Town, an ancient settlement, dating from the time when North-West Kansu was under the sway of great Mongolian chiefs. Tradition has it that this was the centre from which King To-lo, probably a ruler during the time of the Mongol supremacy which terminated about the middle of the fourteenth century, controlled his tribe.

This was the first of the large buried cities we had yet seen, and interested us greatly. The massive clay walls of the enclosure still stood, showing the extended area once inhabited, but now the only building not completely ruined was a temple, with a lean-to of one room, in which lived an old man and his wife. It was an isolated spot, bearing a bad name for brigandage, and no carter spends the night there willingly. We had arrived late in the afternoon, having started early in the morning, so we had declared our fixed determination to get a night's rest here at any price. While

[1] [Kaotai -- Analyst]

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our roof, after which she was restored to her own family, and, to the lasting credit of the Suchow Chamber of Commerce be it said, their pressure compelled the unwilling official to endow the child with a sum of money, in compensation for the loss of her foot.

So far so good; but that Governor of the Suchow gaol also secretly vowed vengeance on the Christian community and on its leader, against whom he proceeded to work persistently and undeviatingly, until Dr. Kao himself was a prisoner in his hands!

CHAPTER XXI

BEYOND THE GREAT WALL

BEFORE the end of May we revisited Kanchow, this time taking the lower road which, though still boggy, was passable, but before we reached Kaotai we had crossed many swamps and flooded fields. We also met with salt-encrusted friable earth, where at each step the outer crust broke, and our feet sank into the soft soil beneath. Here no single blade of grass can live, not even the desert lizard darts across the track, and the sunshine reflected from the ash-grey ground diffuses a dead and bluish light. Two miles outside the gate of Kanchow city a crowd of Christian men, women and children stood to welcome us. During the past year this community had been subject to serious persecution, which was even now heading up to a crisis, yet the services were crowded, there were many desiring baptism, and before the summer was over ninety-eight men and women confessed Christ publicly. The whole of June was spent instructing these catechumens, but during the month of July we made an expedition to a

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484 you.' We had not gone very far when a mounted soldier galloped alongside. 'Ask him his honourable name,' said the senior member of the party from the recesses of the cart, 'and how many children he has.' This led on at once to a friendly conversation, and soon we were supplying the soldier with pears, and a share in the lunch we were carrying, while in return he gave us an immense amount of information, more or less reliable, about the whole district. The road proved indeed difficult to find, and as, from the moment of leaving the fertile land surrounding the city, until we reached Chienfutung, we did not meet a single human being, we should have inevitably wasted much valuable time had we been unescorted. For some time we ploughed our way heavily through the loose sand, to emerge finally on a gravel *glacis* of uncompromising sterility. Eastward stretched a range of sandy foothills, whose outlines were always changing under the bidding of the winds, but which, tradition affirms, hide beneath them the ruins of a very early civilisation, while ancient records speak of at least two towns, at one time ruled by Mongol princes, no traces of which can now be found. The whole impression given, is that of a thickly-inhabited district overtaken by some cataclysm, which has left Tunhwang to stand alone—an island of verdure in an ocean of sand. After three hours' travelling, the coarse grit gave place to boulders, with flakes of mica glittering on the ground; then, following what seemed to be the bed of a former river, bordered by cliffs of conglomerate, rising gradually to a great height, we were led to the back of the sandhills, where unexpectedly we entered upon a green oasis planted with fine young poplar trees, some still vividly green, while others had already changed to clearest yellow. Here were the rock-temples.

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either side stood an attendant, one of which was a gaunt brown shape of terror sent forth to induce men to commit suicide by taking opium. His was a dread figure indeed, but not to be compared with the second, which represented the female instigator of suicide, by means of cutting the throat. She carried no emblem to make her mission clear, but every line of her insinuating face and bold, compelling eye, suggested the Power of Evil, able to break down the last hesitation in the mind which contemplated this dreadful deed; and Chinese women have since told us that many a bride has cut her throat after a visit to that shrine. The consummate horror of this representation so impressed us, that we can well believe it.

Chienfutung habitually stands solitary, but for the visit of an occasional pilgrim, except during one week of the year, when thousands of worshippers crowd its temples, and the air is heavy with burning incense. Streams of small-footed women risk their necks on the precipitous, crumbling paths leading to the upper galleries, nor will they, in spite of the utmost fatigue, leave one single temple unvisited, lest having done so much, they should fail to conciliate that last, final deity whose malice might be incurred by neglect!

CHAPTER XXV

THE LAKE OF THE CRESCENT MOON

We returned to Tunhwang so enthusiastic about the art treasures of 'The Hall of the Thousand Buddhas' that our visitors urged us to make a second expedition to another beauty spot of the locality, Yüehyachüan—'The Lake of the Crescent Moon.' 'Chienfutung is

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the work of man, but the Crescent Lake is the work of the gods,' we were told. It was only three miles from the city, but proved to be so curiously located that one might easily be only fifty yards from it and yet remain unconscious of its existence. We were warned that the road was heavy, so we left in good time, having harnessed our three best beasts to the small cart. An hour's drive brought us to the foot of the sandhills lying to the south, and then we looked right and left, knowing that so far we had not missed our way, yet being quite unable to determine in which direction we should continue.

Finally we turned to the right, when almost immediately our shaft-mule had a bad accident. Failing to disentangle her feet from the soft ground she was pulled over by the two others, falling on her head with nose and mouth completely buried in the loose sand. A yell from the driver brought our second man to the rescue, and they were fortunately able to lift the poor creature up before she was completely smothered. Meanwhile Elder Liu, who had been made responsible for the enterprise, went on ahead, climbing a sand-dune about three hundred feet high. A signal from him, and we proceeded to follow, undertaking one of the most difficult of ascents, as at every step we sank well above the ankles, and finally were obliged to take off our shoes and climb in stockinged feet. When we reached the upper ridge, still we saw nothing beyond the vast expanse of sandhills, but one step more and below, in the narrow space dividing us from the next hill, lay a most exquisite miniature landscape—a small, crescent-shaped lake, in colour a sapphire-blue, while owing to a strange optical effect, the sand slopes around took on a wonderfully soft, mother-of-pearl iridescence. Behind the lake and opposite to us stood a small temple and

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first arrival in Suchow we had heard constant mention of this place, and had made many enquiries how best to reach it. It was very difficult to locate, and seemed to be two or three days' journey from every other oasis in the neighbourhood. We had the conviction that difficult though it might be, Hwahaitz must be visited by the preaching band. One of the Suchow enquirers superintended a business which had a branch in that place. Travelling through Kiayükwan we had unexpectedly met this man riding along the road, and told him of our determination. His instant reply was: 'I have just left there on my way to Suchow, but I will now turn back. You will find me waiting for you at Hwahaitz any time you get there. Fit it in as you can.'

At the close of a long day of preaching we cooked and ate a meal, then rolled up our tents, packed our carts, and left the grassy glades for the stony Gobi. A group of our new friends came to see us off, and among them was 'Lydia,' who had spent the afternoon in our company, sitting with a group of women teaching them the only text she knew: 'Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.'

The sun was setting when we crossed the main road, which would have taken us on our legitimate stage, and turned off due north into a region of bare volcanic hills without a sign of life. Even the single telegraph wire, as we left it behind us, had a friendly and alluring aspect. The moon was but a few days old, and soon abandoned us in a district more weird than anything we had previously seen, and we threaded our way by a path often scarcely wide enough for our cart wheels, and between high volcanic ranges of terrifying outline, from whose sides boulders had constantly fallen, blocking the narrow roadway. Once our front mule

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shied in terror at something none of us could see, but which the carter found to be the carcase of a camel. For hours we progressed in this valley[1] of desolation, and about 2 a.m. emerged into a small patch of watered land, where a few families cultivated melons. We do not like these watered lands in the darkness. Deep ditches are dug in all directions to convey the stream of water, sometimes to one part of the land, and sometimes to another. In and out of the dry ditches the cart bumped and stuck, whilst the animals strained at the high banks. Often the ditch was full of water, and this was worse, as through these rivers of uncertain depths the cart must go, and the experience is nerve-racking.

Before long, the barking of fierce dogs (another of the night-terrors) was heard, and our driver stood behind his mules preparing his whip for a possible fight. The farmer, however, was friendly and hospitable. The young men of the household got up, chained the dogs, and gave us the freedom of the threshing-floor for the night, where we slept in our carts. Early in the morning we gathered the people together, and to their great delight held a gospel service with singing accompanied by the harmonium.

When we left, our hostess gave us a basketful of oil-buns—dough rolled into thin cakes and fried in linseed-oil—and we proceeded on our way, still chasing the elusive Hwahaitz. In three minutes we had left the watered land and were once more in Gobi. A group of five magnificent black vultures caught our attention. They were so huge and so statuesque in outline that it was not until our young men had used the field-glasses that they were convinced these were really living creatures and not a group of rocks. The head was quite bald, and the movement in walking resembled the

1 [Between Chikinpu and Hwahaitz--Analyst]

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000 The days spent there were very hot and tiring, but eminently worth while.

CHAPTER XXXI

JADE GATE TO ANSI

491 To get away from Hwahaitz proved a more arduous business than reaching it had been, and fifty miles of the dreary Gobi still stretched between us and the town of Yümen—Jade Gate—which was our next objective. [312] In the whole of these fifty miles there was only one spot where water was obtainable, and this was merely a brackish spring near to a hut in which lived an old couple. We left Hwahaitz at 4 p.m. on a very hot day, but after sunset it turned bitterly cold. At 2 a.m. we reached the hut, where, having rolled ourselves in a coverlet, we lay down on the sand, but by 4 a.m. the wearisome spectacle of the sun staring at us over the rim of the world, fetched us reluctantly back to our wanderings. By 3 p.m. we joyfully sighted the distinctive tower of Jade Gate, and a more exhausted, travel-worn party seldom entered its portals, but as this was our third visit to Yümen there were plenty of friends to greet us. The gay little town was now looking its best, the opium fields were in bud, the wheat was green, while the freshness of early summer was still upon the foliage. We spent some days in the city, and discovered that a few changes had taken place since our 534 last visit. The Mandarin, with whose wife we had been friendly, had left, and his successor had modernised the entrance of the Yamen. A decoration of crossed flags ornamented the main entrance, over which a clock face was painted, the hands pointing as usual to

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778 by a disobliging priest, and between them succeeded in dislodging the boulder. We entered a spacious and well-kept temple-court containing a well, by the side of which stood a bucket and well-rope. We passed from shrine to shrine without discovering any sign of life, but a few moments later a call from one of the men brought us to a little outhouse, where we found the guardian lying on his *kang* in the grip of raging fever, too weak to move, and being quite alone, had no means whatever of communication with the city. All that our men could do was to draw a bucket of water, which with a few loaves of bread we left within his reach, and later on, when we passed the postman, we sent a message back to the Ansi postmaster telling him of the priest's predicament, and begging for help to be sent.

133 We travelled all the night, and dawn found us at a 494 landmark where a few arid mounds broke the landscape. 491 The place was called Siyaotz—'Four Caves'—the name indicating four caverns which had been hollowed in the hillside, such as might serve to save a traveller's life in the event of high winds or blizzards. There was no point in delaying here more than a few moments to breathe the animals, which were already showing signs of fatigue, although we had accomplished little more than half our stage. But there is no possibility of delay on these hard marches, for the energy produced by the last feed soon ebbs, and consequently the Gobi roads are all marked by the bleaching bones of mules and camels, abandoned by their owners when too exhausted to keep up with the caravan.

The second half of the journey was now made doubly hard by the burning rays of the sun, added to which the grit was looser than before, so that after each short pull of twenty steps the flagging animals would stand still, needing to be urged again and again to make fresh

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efforts. The road here was also quite deserted, as the rigid policy of the Governor had closed it to travellers, and the caravans which normally move up and down this trade-route had vanished. Once, however, we passed a pedestrian, who begged us, as though asking for gold, that we would grant him a drink of water, which of course we did, and afterwards at 10 a.m., thrown across the line of cart-ruts, we came upon the body of another man. A low stick supporting a little bundle of sheepskin threw a patch of shade over his head and served as a signal to passers-by. At first it was not evident if he were dead or alive, but one of the men raised him by the shoulders, whereupon he opened his eyes and murmured, 'A drink of water and I am your slave for life!' We held a cup to his lips, and when he had drunk he somewhat revived, and begging for more, repeated, 'Your slave for life!' We were still many miles from our destination, and our head carter called us aside. 'The man is dying,' he said; 'he is too weak to walk; we can spare neither water nor time. We must press on or we shall lose our mules.' The Christian men were desirous to help, but they also reminded us that if we took him on with us he might die, and thereby involve us in certain complications.

'Nothing will induce us to leave a dying man to his fate!' was our answer; and then seeing that the poor fellow was unable even to stand on his feet, we made room for him in the front of our own cart, while we took it in turns to walk so that the load need not be increased.

At 1.30 p.m. our mules sighted a few blades of green grass, and realising that water was at hand, Molly first gave the signal, lifting her head with a loud neigh! Every beast then summoned its dwindling store of energy, and a few minutes later we pulled into the inn court. The innkeeper at once took our sick man to

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is dreary beyond words. The visit of a traveller is their only touch with the outer world, and though in ordinary times and at certain seasons the caravans pass to and fro in large numbers, yet there are many months of wintry weather when there is scarcely a human being on the road. No wonder, then, that their[1] most valued possession is the harvest reaped from the field of opium, which supplies them with their sole luxury of life. Here, as in every other place, we visited each family, sat with them, talked with them, proclaimed Christ as Saviour and King, and on leaving saw to it that each family had now some Christian literature, which we hoped would be read during the long and dreary Gobi winter days and nights. Also before we left Petuntz we had an interesting interview with the man whose life we had saved. We found him to be only twenty-eight years of age, a native of Hangchow in Shensi, very well educated, and also that he had with him sufficient money for all his expenses, having come to 'Kow Wai' hoping to secure a good post. His gratitude to our party knew no bounds, and the villagers kept reiterating to him how lucky he was to have been picked up, as during these weeks when the roads were almost deserted, already several pedestrians had been found dead from thirst.

We left at sunset for the next stage, which was to Hungliuyüan—'The Park of Tamarisks'—a charming though deceptive name, and we reached it over ground which by night could have been mistaken for snowfields, the alkali deposit lying in a thick crust on the surface and making it soft and spongy. There were only four souls in Hungliuyüan, namely, one man employed as courier by the post-office, and a woman and her two sons. Of the three inns, two had been abandoned by their owners, who found they could make

[1] [Residents of Petuntz -- Analyst]

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no profit under the present conditions.[1] A petition had been addressed by the innkeepers to the Governor, bringing to his notice the fact that unless they were granted a sufficient government subsidy, they, too, would return to the city, in which case the road would become impassable to travellers, there being no one left to collect the necessary fuel for their use, nor anyone to keep the well clear of sand. In this locality we were among low, bare hills of a dark and threatening appearance. They were formed of a rock of a deep purple colour, their surface being covered with loose fragments which were constantly breaking away under the influence of the weather, and the ridges presented a sharp, spiked outline. We observed also traces of a greenish granite, while in places the ground was covered with small pieces of white porphyry which looked as though a slight snowstorm had fallen.

Our next stopping-place was Tachüan—'Great Spring'—and from thence we came on to Malienking—'The Iris Well.' We here had been overtaken by a party of travellers from the province of Honan, an official hurrying to Kuche on the Kashgar road, to take over the seals of office from a Mandarin who was seriously ill. For several days we kept together, greatly to our advantage, as Mr. Yüan had excellent animals and was travelling very light, so that at each stage he got ahead of us and kindly gave warning of our arrival, with instructions that a room should be swept for us and fodder prepared for the animals. On several occasions this courteous gentleman slept in his cart in order that we might have the use of the only guest-room, and each day he and his suite joined us at family worship (his tall Moslem carter standing on the fringe of the little group, signifying his approval as we read the Scriptures), all reverently bowing in prayer

[1] [Restricted travel, see p. 187--Analyst]

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when we asked for protection from the dangers of the road, as they recognised instinctively that: 'Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah.'

It was great joy at one small oasis[1] to be greeted by an old friend, a man who had registered his name in Ansi as an enquirer. He had been appointed as inspector of the poles which carry the single telegraph wire across this part of the desert, the gales so constantly uprooting them that the whole route is divided into sections, each of which is placed in the charge of a responsible man whose business it is to keep them in repair. At a further stage of the journey where the work was not so well arranged, we often found the poles lying flat, our mules' feet being in danger from the entangled coils upon the ground. The line of the trade-route is indicated by this single telegraph wire, which often seems to the despairing traveller the only assurance he has of human things not seen—men, families, cities, and the normal objects of life.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE RAVINE OF BABOONS

At Iris Well we were only thirty long miles from Hsinghsinghsia, the military frontier station of Turkestan. We were anxious to arrive by daylight as we had reason to anticipate delay, and we hoped that twenty-four hours would be sufficient for transacting all business relating to passports and permits; it was a great relief, therefore, to see the clouds gathering, which meant the promise of a cool day. Taking advantage of this we hurried up all our preparations, and left in good time. At midday we reached the frontier proper—a waterless

[1] [Near Malienking -- Analyst]

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133 shore. (1)

1. I often measured the amount of mud present in one cubic meter of water from the Hwang Ho and found that it averaged close to six kilograms; after a day of rain in Bau de tschou I even obtained 6.9 kilograms per cubic meter.

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578 /146/ I reached Lanchow fu on November 4, after having had to travel on the last day only through the large loess-filled valley basin of this city. On the night before there was a final scene which I shall not withhold from my readers for it seems to me characteristic for the way of living, the thoughts and aspirations of the poor Kansu people. It had grown late by the time we reached the town of Hsiao ho kou. And it had cost me considerable effort to succeed in having a gate opened. When I had finally found shelter at a small inn, a fight broke out which looked serious to me. Women scolded and shouted and two old Chinese fathers pulled each other's pigtails and tried to knock one another down, trampling and kicking. Even though the yard where I had left my animals was only 8 meters by 8 meters large and on each of two sides there was only a low small house of three sections /kien/, yet the hotel was run by two parties. And I had nine animals! The two owners had disagreed as to who was to feed the ninth animal and pocket the small amount of money for straw (about 25 pfennig). When they finally separated, one of them pulled one of my nags over to his side by its halter while the other held on to the animal's tail. No amount of persuasion on my part had any effect and yet I did not care to play the part of Solomon and pronounce judgment!

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CHAPTER IV

/147/ In Kansu and on the Border of Tibet

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● 491 Lanchow fu is the capital of the province of Kansu. And whenever a man from Kansu told me about his Lanchow fu and all about the cost of flour and bread, tobacco and liquor in the city, he always told of the wonder of the world to be found there, namely, the pontoon bridge across the great Yellow River. "You foreigners surely have nothing like that," I was assured. "There is nothing like it under heaven." [text continues on p. 241]

it under heaven."

The common people usually call the city of Lanchow fu, Gao lan hsien, after the title of the sub-prefect or head of the district (hsien) who has his seat there and who chiefly deals with the people. (1) The city lies close to the right bank of the Hwang Ho where

1. This post of Gao lan hsien was supposed to be a very busy one but poorly paid. These officials were therefore usually transferred to a good sinecure after a year. If they knew how to make a good impression on their superiors and relieve them of a great deal of work, they usually got Tsin tschou in the following year. I heard of a mandarin who three times changed over from one of these posts to the other, i. e., in one year he had to supplement his salary, whereas in the next, his earnings were very good.

the latter narrows down for a short distance to a width of only 250 meters. There is no other place up and down the river where there is a similarly favorable spot for crossing over.

Each winter at this place the Yellow River is frozen over for at least one and one-half months, so that even heavily-laden freight wagons can drive across. The opening of this natural bridge which took place toward the end of December was always a great festival occasion and was celebrated with great pomp. First of all the Gao lan hsien as fu mu kwan, i. e., father-mother-mandarin, as the patriarchally-minded Chinese calls his district chief, had to drive over the ice in his gala carriage, accompanied by a large retinue, in order to prove that the ice was safe. On the other hand, in fall and spring when the ice broke up, river traffic was often blocked for days or weeks. One could, perhaps, at the risk of one's life cross the raging stream between the ice floes on a raft of goat-skin bags. But in the spring when the ice had disappeared, the famous pontoon bridge, the afore-mentioned wonder of the world, was set up at the expense of the provincial government. Twenty-two box-shaped wide boats of poplar wood were held together with heavy iron chains and especially with thick hemp ropes, as may be seen on Plate XXXIV. On top of these were laid unfinished planks, but so unevenly that one seldom dared ride across on horseback. Everywhere there were large holes, everywhere the planks rocked and tipped. The wooden railing, too, was more to look at than to lean on. Even Europeans regarded the bridge as a wonder of the world, but only /148/ to

491 wonder why this weak-looking work of man did not cause untold damage annually with the very swift river current. On several of the large iron posts that looked like cannon bores and were rammed into the earth along the bank in order to hold the large ropes and chains of the bridge, I found an inscription which revealed that the bridge had been put together in this manner long ago under the Ming emperors (in the fifth year of Emperor Hung Wu, 1372 A. D.), and was thus an arrangement that was centuries old. The government was obliged to pay out 10,000 taels (30,000 marks) each year to keep it in repair. And the cost of repair was actually said to have consumed a few thousand taels each summer. A hemp rope alone of the kind necessary to give added support during the summer [661] floods, cost about 1,000 marks in our money. But from the 10,000 taels the officials who in the eyes of the people represented father and mother, must have been able to pocket a tidy little sum. (1)

1. After negotiations lasting one-half year - for a long time the "parents of the people" would not hear of a change - a German firm succeeded in getting a contract to build a narrow iron bridge across the river a year after my arrival. This was built during the years 1908-1911.

712 Thus Lanchow fu is a bridgehead, a fortress, which defends a convenient Hwang Ho crossing. From time immemorial the place was regarded as important and was occupied by troops. Long before the beginning of our era, during the Ts'in and Han dynasties, we find mention of a fortified encampment here. (2) The Yellow

2. In the feudal age in China, during the Tschou dynasty (1122-255 B.C.) the boundary of present-day Lanchow fu bordered on the territory of the Hsi Kiang (Chinese), who, one suspects, were Tibetan nomads. At times the place was also entirely inundated with Hsi Kiang. At the time of the Ts'in dynasty (255-206 B.C.) and of the Han (206 B.C. -220 A.D.) the district became more and more Chinese. But the chief city of the district lay somewhat farther south. The present-day settlement was begun by Emperor Wen ti, the founder of the Sui dynasty (589-605). In the year 764 during the Tang dynasty everything was again lost to the Tibetans and remained in their hands, with some interruptions, until, after the year 1000, the Hsi Hsia kingdom

491 Here, as in Lanchow fu, the sum set aside since ancient times
661 by the imperial government for bridge repairs has played a certain part in the income of the hsien of Hsining. The city lies in the far west of China proper. And China represents the world to its inhabitants as well as its rulers. Therefore, outside the west gate of Hsining - as every child in the city knew - lay the tien bien yüe ya kiao, that is, the bridge which officially connects the earth with the moon. Now, no one can blame the holders of the honorable post of hsien for annually pocketing the monies with which, by royal decree, they are supposed to keep this important bridge in repair. But I was shown at least one stone which is supposed to have at one time been the beginning of the bridge. From here the way leads to the Hsi tien, the "western heaven," as Tibet is referred to by many Buddhists.

231 Another peculiarity of the city of Hsining is the enormous num-
494 ber of ponies which its inhabitants keep. There are surely several thousand of them. Almost everyone has his pony and everyone setting out on a journey, every cobbler or apprentice, rides horseback. Feed is cheap and the price of ponies not high. And if one is not too particular, one can buy up quite a number of ponies in
437 a rather short time. In this respect Hsining is a favorable starting point for a journey into Tibet, and that is why I again looked it up. Nevertheless, it took me a whole week to buy three good ponies. During this time I had ten Chinese women at my inn sew a large servants' tent for me. Carpenters, saddlers, shoemakers, smiths were engaged to complete my equipment. There was nothing in stock, everything had to be ordered. I had to bargain endlessly for every single object. For every button or piece of rope, for every little thing ten times its value was boldly demanded, laboriously I was obliged to bargain it down to a normal price, and if a day later I bought a duplicate, the tiresome haggling began again. Besides, there were so many things I wanted which I could not get. For instance, I had great trouble in that big city finding three pieces of wood which could be used as tent poles. The region has extremely little wood. After we had spent days looking in vain for a piece that would serve as a ridge pole, the son of the general finally took what I needed out of the arsenal and gave it to me.

Anyone wishing to travel in China should first of all tuck patience into his traveling bag. A Chinese must never be allowed to notice that you are in a hurry for a thing. In Hsining fu, also, all trade, whether in the open market or in shops, is carried on

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927
AF13 Northwest China AF13

rouse, and together they will then join the Shensi sitter, when, their band being complete, they will accomplish their long-appointed mission of raising mankind.

At nightfall we passed the Kansu border. The first incident which made us aware of this fact was an official proclamation with the two Chinese ideographs, meaning Kansu, heading it. Simultaneously the character of the road changed, and we found ourselves moving in the darkness through an avenue of stately trees, our hearts beating high, for we had now reached the Province indicated on our 'Sealed Orders,' although we knew not as yet the locality to which we were going.

That night, our first in Kansu, our bed was in a stable. Merely a cave hollowed out of the loess-cliff, it held a little mud *kang*,[1] on which the travelling carter was wont to sleep while the mules fed at his side. The walls were black with the dirt of generations, the floor was littered with damp stable-manure, and our hand-luggage was laid in the manger. The door was a low, irregular aperture; no opening had been left for a window; the flicker of the linseed-oil lamp filled the cave with heavy shadows, and though the night was very cold the *kang* had not been warmed.

We had often tried to picture the real conditions of the inn at Bethlehem, and it seemed to us that night that we had come much nearer to their realisation.

By the side of our cave, raised three feet from the ground, was a small hollowed recess, about the size of a large baker's oven. The opening was screened by a filthy, hanging rag, and within lay three men, tasting the sensuous enjoyment of the opium pipe. The space was so small that the feet of the smokers were thrust outside, and though the night was bitter and their

[1] A brick or mud bed heated with a fire.

5: Tafel--290 T-3 (1905-1908) 1914 AJ1 Tibet
N.W.China AF13
Plate XXXIX.
/176C/

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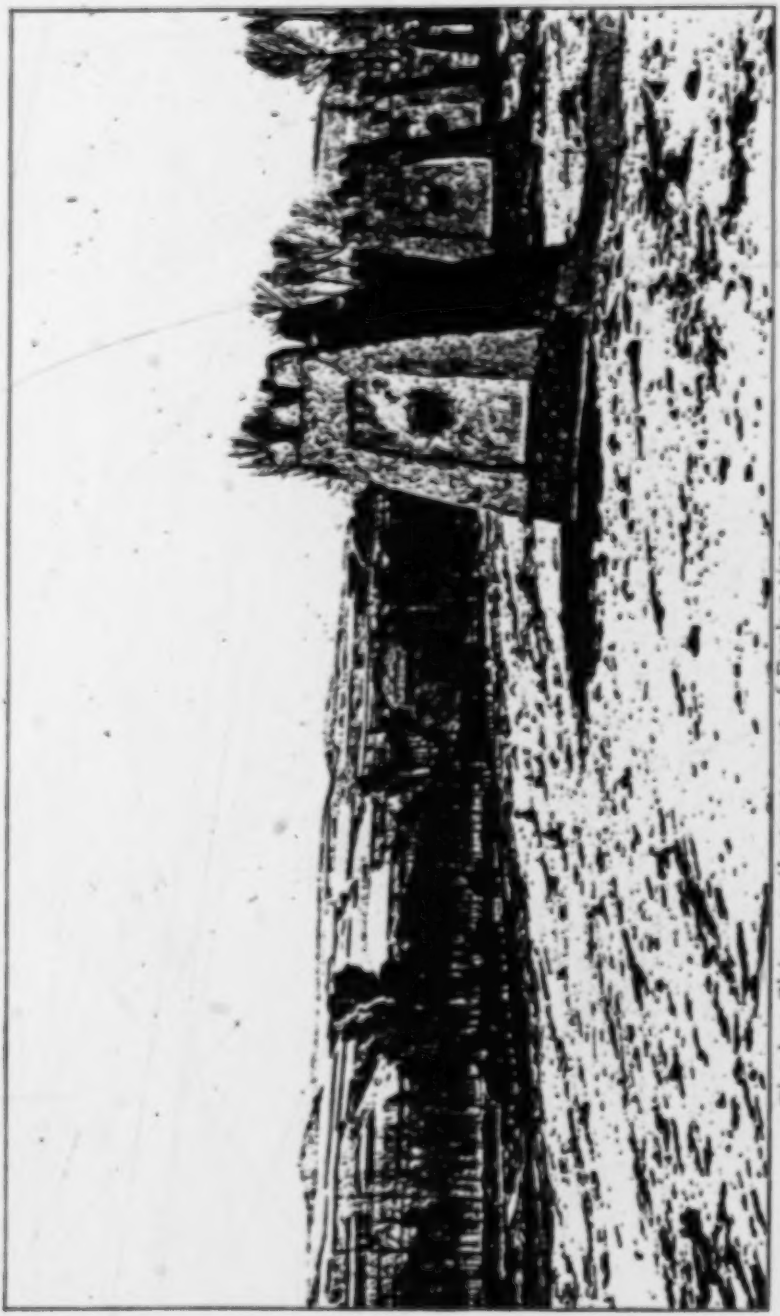

The last Chinese milestones west of Dankar ling.

133 March 27. We followed the deep ravine of Ka ts'a farther down. On the edge of the brook there was only a narrow strip of winter ice. Palm catkins were in bloom and the buds of the trees that covered the steep slopes had begun to swell. Early spring had begun here. At night the minimum temperature was still -5°, but during the day the thermometers went up to as much above zero. Married couples were plowing on the narrow strips of fields farther down in the valley; two yak oxen were unwillingly pulling the clumsy hook-shaped plow under the vigorous beating of the powerful young women.

After we had passed a few villages and a small monastery we were again at the banks of the Yangtze Kiang. The valley was now still deeper than I had seen it up in Lamda and Tombu mda. It had here become a deep impassable gash in the rock through which a greenish-blue ribbon was winding its way between naked brown ribs of rock. The clear waves were entirely free of ice, only here and there deep in the valley the eye caught sight of a little white flake where the water dashed against cliffs or fell over boulders. From our great height the stream which at this point is over 700 kilometers from its source, looked quite insignificant. (Plate XXXI). One felt as though one could look into its heart. High above its present water-mark was the line of its summer rise. It then has four times as much water as it has now in early spring. There is of course water from the melting winter snow but this amounts to so little that it has no effect on the water level. At the end of March the west winds have diminished in force but they still prevailed and the southeast monsoon had not yet set in.

485 March 28. We spent the night in our tents which we had set up beside a village. The inhabitants were used to passing travelers and did not look at us very closely so that they had nothing to criticize. They demanded a quarter rupee from us for using the campsite, for dry argol and a huge pile of straw which my animals cleaned up during the night. Although in Dergi as well as in Nan tsien only coined money is accepted, there is no small change, and thus for payments of amounts less than a rupee, a piece of silver is cut up, and one pays literally a fourth, a third or half a rupee.

491 The night was cloudy and in the morning thick, wet snow covered us. When it cleared at eight o'clock we quickly packed up and, after an exhausting ride at full speed up hill and down dale, it was two o'clock when we reached the ferry across the Yangtze Kiang which is supposed to be called Tschomdo and where the big road crosses over to the left bank. There are two huts of loam standing

there at the entrance to a large lateral valley; they belong to the ferrymen. On the bank itself there were walls four and five feet thick and half again as high as a man. Every single free stone of these walls was a half yak-load of Chinese tea which, pressed and sewn into black yak skins, was waiting to be transported to Central Tibet. In the next few days 800 oxen were supposed to come and take them into the interior along the route I had just come. 491

From the ferrymen I learned that along the lively little stream Tscho Chu which is eight meters wide and one meter across and has its mouth near Tschomdo, there is a road to Tsiamdo by means of which one can go through the free kingdom /166/ of Lhado in eight days and reach the town of Tsiamdo and the large Batang-Lhari-Lhasa road. Foolishly enough, I told my men that same evening of my intention to follow this road south. The next morning Yin lu tse and Ma "Thirty-six" had disappeared, never to return. Yin lu tse had struck up a great friendship with Tschang tung sche and "Thirty-six" had left behind in Dscherku ndo a girl with whom he was seriously in love. Thus it was perhaps only a coincidence that they escaped this particular night. I now noticed that every day one of them had come to me with a request for a larger advance. Both of them also asked me to give them guns for the night because there were robbers in the vicinity. But since I kept the guns inside my tent and, as usual, had locked the horses' chains and kept the key in my pocket, even when I am asleep, I did not lose so very much. But a gold and silver tauschiert sword decorated with carnelian, that I had bought in Dscherku ndo from a Gerdschi chieftain, was gone. The two Dungani that had been left behind, Hai and So, were loudest in their accusations against the fugitives. "They took along our only kosher cooking pot," they complained in despair, "and on top of it the kosher traveling provisions for the next fortnight." "Just yesterday 'Thirty-six' took a whole month's salary from me, in order to buy himself some silver earrings," Li added in his deep bass. Meanwhile Da Tschang crept secretly into my tent and explained: "Just yesterday 'Thirty-six' asked me to give him the only shirt I possess; by God, it was worth 2 taels in Hsining. If I buy a new one here it will cost me 10 rupees. If you want me to go on with you and not turn back to Dscherku ndo in order to fetch my shirt, then please pay me the 10 rupees for the damage which your servants did to me." He never for a moment forgot his part and always knew how to derive profit from a situation. He was the only one of the remaining four men who spoke Tibetan reasonably fluently and he was the only one who understood the South Tibetan dialects. 487 000

6: Tafel--522 T-3 (1905-1908) 1914 AJ1 Tibet
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/facing 320/

Plate LXXIV

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On the ancient military road between Hsingan fu and Tung kwan ting.

Narrow pass formed by loess in the large highway near Tung kwan ting.

6: Tafel--524 T-3 (1905-1908) 1914 AJ1 Tibet

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Plate LXXV.

/facing 321/

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Loess-cave farm house near Feng tsiang fu, Shensi.

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Homeward bound. (My wagon on the great plain within sight of the city gate of Kai feng fu.)

entertaining Scotsman knows that on this evening I could not have fallen into better hands, and that in the short hours before midnight my diaphragm had to withstand almost inhuman salvos of laughter. I hoped to meet other old acquaintances in Lanchow fu, but this time I was disappointed. My friend Van Dyk was with his bishop in the mission of Liang tschou fu for the annual retreat of the fathers. So, much to my regret, I could not even shake his hand in gratitude for his active participation in my efforts in safeguarding in his home the booty of my individual expeditions.

I stayed in the chief city until I had found a freight transport with which I could make a contract to have my baggage brought to Hsingan fu as soon as possible where I could pick it up again. Inasmuch as Mr. Shields helped me in this matter, I was able to leave the city in a few days. I rode on the large military highway between Lanchow fu and Hsingan fu, the road which also follows the telegraph line and which in the '70s the re-conqueror of Turkistan, the great Tso ts'ung tang, had had bordered with poplars for a distance of hundreds of kilometers. At one time, in order to protect this avenue, he put a death sentence on every wanton destruction of a tree. The trees still stand for stretches covering many days' journeys, but the track often cannot follow the old avenue for long stretches. Loess makes the ground too loose. Rains have often lengthened and deepened the valley fissures by hundreds of meters and thus the rows of trees border ravines which today no man can cross; meanwhile traffic often had to take an entirely different direction.

At the stopping place of Ngan (An) ting hsien the camel- and /325/ mule-drivers who take care of a large part of the freight traffic between Kansu and Shensi, take a somewhat more southerly route than do the carts. I continued to follow this mule track and decided to combine it with a stop-over at Ts'inchow, the richest city of Kansu. In the vicinity of Ngan ting hsien the country is still rather thinly populated. Only after 100 li did I get to Niu yin, a town of 100 families, and 20 li beyond came Ma yin which has 400-500 families and a larger market. Close by, the brook breaks through a granite range, the first solid rock that I saw since the Hwang Ho ditch near Lanchow fu, and behind Ma yin the loess became thinner and only a few decameters thick. The density of population increased visibly and the Mohammedan element which is very numerous along the road near Huining hsien and Lung te hsien, Ping liang fu, fell into the background. I had now come into a definitely mountainous

5: Tafel--260 T-3 (1905-1908) 1914 AJ1 Tibet

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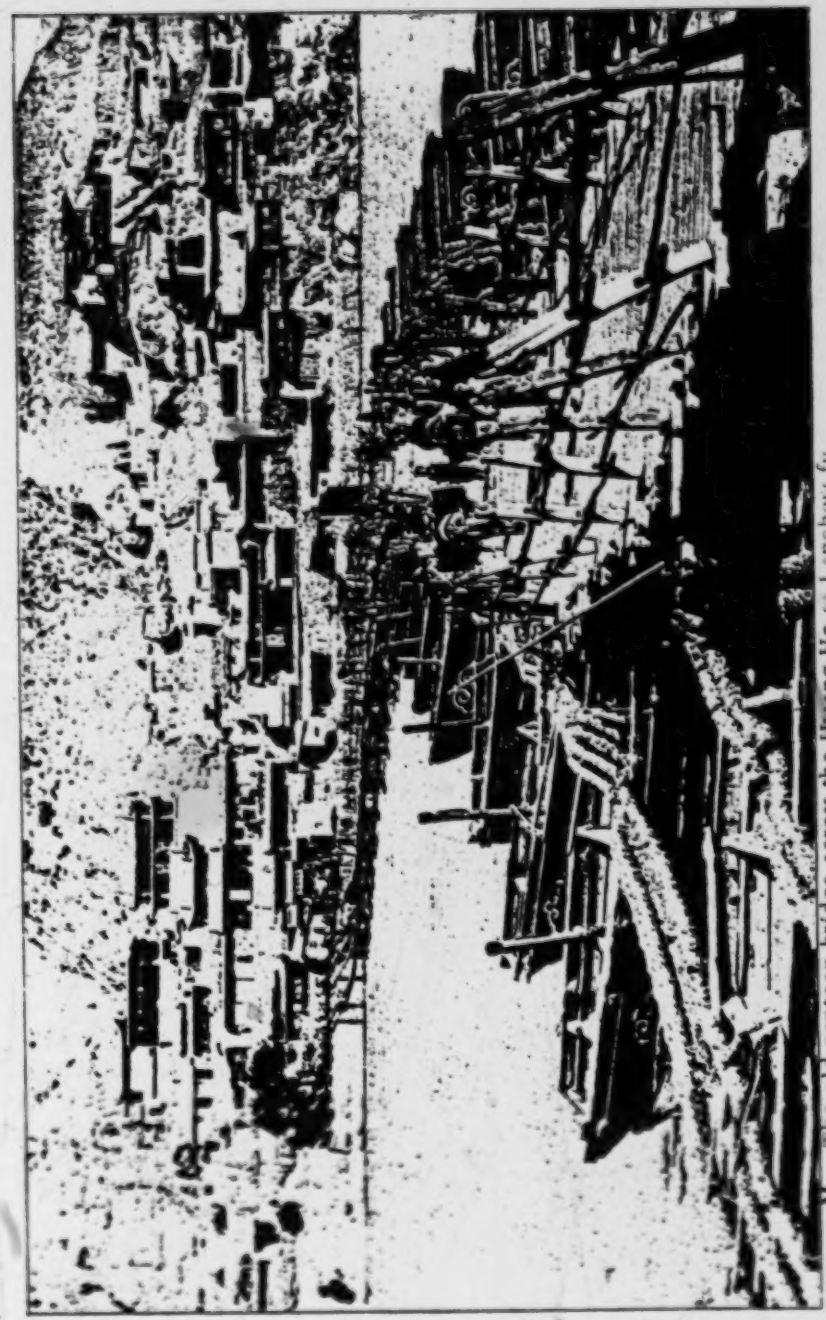
Plate XXXIV.

/1603/

● 491



The old pontoon bridge across the Hwang Ho at Lanchow fu.

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At last my carts had arrived from Lanchow fu and I could continue my trek to the coast. Aside from its history and the Be ling, Hsingan fu is not a city which invites one to stay for any length of time. The large city of 300,000 to 400,000 inhabitants lies on a treeless plain and has no kind of canalization. The missionaries complained about the great heat in /330/ summer, while autumn and winter at first bring too much rain and wet snow and later northwest storms and dust which penetrates everything.

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I decided that from now on I would stay near my carts. But when they were packed in the courtyard of my inn and slowly rattling along in the direction of the east gate, I could not resist making a hasty little visit to the tien tschu tang, to the good Fransiscan monks. And they decided that the journey to the railroad and to the great centers of culture was still so long that I would have to refresh myself a bit, because I was reduced to skin and bones, as an Irish priest remarked. So it happened that it was 12 o'clock at noon before I rode away from the refectory. Meanwhile a snowstorm had set in, but unflinchingly I trotted on with my mule, determined not to rest until I had overtaken my carts. I hunted and hunted for them until far into the night. Without having found them I was obliged to look for shelter, stiff with cold. On the next day I looked again in vain; it seemed as though the ground had swallowed the carts. When I had again come within the vicinity of Hsingan fu I saw, in the late afternoon, only 20 lis from the city, my Brdyal in a tearful mood, sitting in front of a little house, beside a large swamp around which I had ridden so far. In the middle of it two carts were stuck fast, without mules and without drivers. They held my possessions. It is true, they were standing in the middle of the big road but the muddy water that flooded the road reached almost to the hub of the wagons, and in order to reach them one was obliged to wade up to one's waist in the cold water. The carts had been stuck there from the time I took leave of the fathers. The drivers were said to have done everything they could in order to get out of the hole, and had finally borrowed a dozen mules and harnessed them to the carts, but in vain. There could be no thought of getting the carts away from there before dry weather set in. The drivers had long since reached that conclusion, too, and had taken themselves off; they probably intended to wait until the end of winter. Around the outside of the swamp there were 28 other carts stuck in the thick mud. In one place drivers were whipping a cart with a large team down off the road into a cotton field that had not yet been

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•491 driven over, in another place they were shoveling a passage from the field back to the road. Here the owners of the field were defending themselves against the inconsiderate draymen and built impediments against the carts, there drivers were even fighting some farmers because the latter were not willing to let their fields be destroyed. On the second night I slept with Brdyal on the carts in the swamp because we were afraid they would be plundered. But on the next morning I rode into the city in order to get new wagons and on the following day by noon I finally reached the swamp with three new wagons. Meanwhile the situation there had not improved, in fact, for my baggage it was high time that help arrived. The carts had sunk in still deeper and in several places the muddy water covered the bottom of the wagon. During the night there had been frost, and ice two centimeters thick made the re-loading agonizing for the men. Nearby a large wagon carrying Lanchow tobacco had sunk in so deep that the boxes were under a half meter of water. Traffic was almost completely /331/ tied up and in a nearby field lay two dead mules. That is the largest and oldest state road in China, on which for more than three or four thousand years busy trades people of old China have despatched their freight and their necessities, on which all the old emperors had traveled, on which millions worth of goods and millions of people come and go.

000 After this new interlude, my three new carts slowly rolled along toward the distant coast (Plate LXXIV). Gradually it grew colder and the condition of the road improved. After the first week I reached the city of Tung kwang ting where the axles of the wagons were changed and at long last in the third week at the city of Honan fu I came to the new Peking-Hankow railroad, to the new China, the China which the world is talking about, which is becoming modern and is making the great revolutionary change, whose leaders wish to break with all that is old in order to bring about a renascence for their country. But to the new China are still attached the great mountain ranges and mountainous lands, which have always been a source of danger for its culture, which have never exerted a fecundating influence on the empire, and have always sought to push it down again to the level of a barbaric state; to the new China are still attached the provinces which are constantly fighting the central government. But the world moves on steadily and development is its primary law, and for this reason the victors must be those who have written progress on their banner!